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ABSTRACT

Four papers presented at a colloquium on foreign language teaching and learning stress topics and problems of immediate concern to the teaching profession. The documents include: (1) "ACTFL and the Changing Scene" by Edward Scebold, (2) "The Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Instruction: Overview and Recent Developments" by Guillermo del Olmo, (3) "The Implications of Recent Theoretical Issues on Objectives of Foreign Language Instruction" by Albert Valdman, and (4) "Language Teaching: Can We Afford to Be Relevant?" by Earl W. Stevick. (RL)

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Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Proceedings of The Colloquium

held at

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The Center For Language Education

FOREWORD

The Center for Language Education of Fairleigh Dickinson University is pledged to promote continuity, growth and quality in foreign language teaching. In order to accomplish its aims, it encourages cooperation with educational institutions and professional organizations. One of its central objectives is to provide leadership and guidance in foreign language education, and to help foreign language teachers keep abreast of developments in their field. In keeping with this objective, the Center has started a program in foreign language teaching designed for part-time, in-service study by certified foreign language teachers who want to further their professional competence in the theory and practice of foreign language instruction. By co-sponsoring a Colloquium on Teaching and Learning it has sought to provide further service to the profession in making accessible the most up-to-date information on the changing foreign language scene.

The papers read at the Colloquium make clear the timeliness of this undertaking, and the dire need that foreign language teachers have to find their way through the enormous mass of contradictory and rather technical information constantly becoming available, in order to isolate the essential issues that are most relevant to their becoming increasingly effective teachers. Above all, the Center is interested in showing, through actual work with language students, how to put to use in the classroom the valid insights distilled from the unmanageable bulk of professional literature.

The New Jersey Foreign Language Teachers Association is also most earnest in trying to find ways to be of practical service to the profession by facilitating communication among teachers and with specialists in foreign language methodology and allied disciplines. The Executive Committee of the Association is constantly looking for new and better ways to demonstrate how words can be translated into action--how the content of professional literature and the speeches of our meetings can be used to make more effective and efficient the classroom performance of the teacher.

The four papers read at the Colloquium were written independently. The only guidelines given were to be relevant to teachers' needs and to deal with fundamental issues in the most up-to-date manner possible. It is significant, however, that recurrent themes–treated from different perspectives–appear through all four papers: Malaise and confusion in our field, the need for professional and individual action to face the challenges of our times, the search for

ways to cope from within the profession with the significance of revolutionary developments in linguistics and psychology, the efforts that must be made to understand the values and attitudes of the young and the nature of the demands of students at all levels. . . .In short, these four papers represent a professional effort to be for our times and of our times.

The foreign language profession is indebted to Dean Donald L. Herdman (Peter Sammartino College of Education) and to Dean Malcolm Sturchio (Leonard Dreyfuss College) for making possible the publication of the Proceedings of the Colloquium.

Margherita Marchione, Center for Language Education, FDU
Guillermo del Olmo, Executive Committee, NJFLTA
Madison, September 1, 1971

ACTFL AND THE CHANGING SCENE

Edward Scebold
ACTFL

I have noted recently that to really be in style, one should begin a talk by quoting from Dr. Charles E. Silberman and *Crisis in the Classroom (The Remaking of American Education).* I am adverse to giving the man all this free publicity on his book, especially when the topic is such a depressive one, and so I refuse to quote him. But one need not go to Silberman to find concern about what is happening.

It is interesting to glance through your program for the rest of the day; I could have begun my remarks by introducing you to three upcoming talks on the three R's: Recent Developments, Re-examination, and Relevance. We are very concerned with what is happening, aren't we? And rightly so!

Of course, there is reason for concern. We face problems in foreign languages, like many other areas in education, that we did not dream of even as recently as two years ago. We have been caught napping, and it is not a pleasant realization to wake up and find the future of the entire discipline threatened because of our shortsightedness.

The situation is not, however, in every respect a bleak one. At last we have the motivation to begin doing some of the things we have only talked about, primarily because we felt secure and did not really need to get out and work on putting our ideas into practice. Requirements were, for example, a very comfortable reassurance and, in many cases, a deterrent to change. Now, we see that eroding away. And, a somewhat unpredictable national attitude has left us wondering whether or not we are actually experiencing, in the words of *Time* magazine, "The Cooling of America" or some other phenomena. Are we indeed entering a period of neo-isolationism?

We must begin to re-evaluate and re-examine not only WHAT we are teaching and HOW we are teaching but WHOM we are teaching. The student of the 70's is a "new" student with ideas and opinions totally different from the student of the 50's and 60's. The new student is more aware, and certainly more critical of what is going on around him. He wants to speak out, to be heard, to effect change and to have "a piece of the action." The change made in the foreign language teaching profession must take into consideration the type of students we are going to be teaching in this coming decade.

I did not, however, come to try to explain to you what is

happening in America, in general, or in foreign language education, in particular. My assignment is to relate what is happening at ACTFL with what we do find happening in foreign language education.

To my new responsibilities at ACTFL I brought with me a certain number of ideas as to what changes might be made to better serve the profession. To these ideas have been added the contributions of colleagues who have been speaking out on issues of particular concern. The most prominent concern in many people's minds is—how can ACTFL reach out beyond the boundaries of the past and become involved in the new present and the new future in research and innovation in the search for new and better ways to lead the profession?

To the three R's (which you will be hearing about later in the way) I would like to add a fourth, ACTFL's own R—which stands for REPRESENTATION. Representation in a national membership organization dedicated to serving our needs and interests, our immediate and long-term goals. Although a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, ACTFL can be as strong as its strongest members and can provide the means for sharing our common strength, for using that strength to overcome our common difficulties and to face our common crises.

There are an estimated 100,000 teachers of foreign languages in the United States. ACTFL, at present, has 10,000 members. We could, therefore, speak of representing 10% of the foreign language teaching field. But, first of all, do we really represent our membership, second does 10% really constitute representation, and third, is there a profession for us to represent? These questions are all so interrelated that it is hard to separate them enough to call for separate answers. It is clear that we need ACTFL—otherwise the Modern Languages Association would not have been subject to pressures from you and me and all of us to establish our Council. Unfortunately, the anticipated response of 15,000 members in the first two years was far from realized. ACTFL is going into its fifth year short of its goal. ACTFL at its current size represents limited membership, limited financial resources, and limited horizons. It can, therefore, provide only limited services—publications, some information to members, an annual meeting, a small Study Abroad Program. Often we are told that ACTFL should sponsor institutes, new research projects, new teaching methodology courses, new graduate programs here and abroad, new scholarships and fellowships. Frankly, we'd love to. ACTFL should go in these directions—and, with the backing of a large vocal and energetic membership we can.

The scene, in all senses of the word, is indeed changing and we are changing with it willy-nilly. Let us for a moment consider the scene—not so much before us but around us. We are part of the living theater—the fourth wall (that for fifty years had separated the teachers from the student-audience) is crumbling. Our students are sharing the spotlight, setting the stage, hogging the best lines and with greater and greater frequency writing the script. These changes of scene are by no means peculiar to large urban areas. They are happening all over the country. The teacher in a small town in Kansas is going through the same changes as the teacher in Hoboken, New Jersey. How do we get the teacher in New Jersey together with the teacher in Kansas? Through annual meetings? Through journals? Through Newsletters? Through direct exchange? I ask you, I ask myself what should be ACTFL's role? What we must have to bring these teachers together—in spirit if not in person —is literally—a cast of thousands. ACTFL MUST GROW. You and I must see to it that our colleagues in the wings are encouraged to join us and to take new and more challenging parts to play in the changing scene. ACTFL does not need just members. We must all become responsible to each other and to our organization, more responsive to those seeking direction. We must all become active—we must all become ACTFL.

You will, I hope, soon be aware of a few immediate changes in ACTFL's services. Our publications are beginning to reflect new and different teaching methods—departments on individualized instruction and teacher training programs across the country will appear in future issues of our journal, *Foreign Language Annals.* I am particularly enthusiastic about the section to be called "Tomorrow Morning" which is being planned for future issues. It will contain ideas that can be developed into mini-lessons for tomorrow's class with just a few minutes of planning time. It might be a mini-lesson teaching a particular cultural concept or a hint on how to teach some specific vocabulary item. More attention will be given to specific issues devoted to a special topic. For example, plans are underway to devote the October issue to culture. That issue will include not only articles devoted to the topic but also annotated bibliographies of recent publications for the teaching of culture and lessons on cultural items and topics.

This year ACTFL started publishing a bulletin, *Accent on ACTFL.* To insure that our journal and our bulletin will reflect the needs of our membership, we have included a questionnaire in the April issue of *Accent,* giving our membership the opportunity to speak out on ACTFL publication policy. I do hope those of you who

are ACTFL members will take the five minutes that it will require to sit down and give us your opinions. While on the subject of publications, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to submit items for publication to ACTFL. We are looking for short informal items as well as the longer formal article. If you have a new idea, a good classroom hint, why not share it with other members of the profession?

Our Annual Meeting will also present changes in outline and content. We plan to organize brief workshops within the framework of the meeting on such topics as using research, interdisciplinary foreign language programs, mini-courses for FL's and developing cultural teaching units. At present, specific plans are being made for pre-conference workshops on the topics of behavioral objectives and culture. In behavioral objectives, the emphasis will be on how to use this concept in planning foreign language curriculum. It will be possible to individualize the workshops and work with small groups both in terms of their language and sophistication for handling behavioral objectives. This workshop will build on a similar workshop held in Texas prior to the Annual Meeting.

Another pre-conference workshop will be devoted to the place of culture in foreign languages and how we may better teach this integral part of language. By bringing together the people who have been most active in the area and concentrating on five specific themes, we hope to begin to define for ourselves exactly what it is we are aiming for and how to accomplish these goals.

Study Abroad—organized in direct response to our members' expressed wishes—can grow to include sites in new countries, present new models for other programs to emulate. But, as with all ACTFL activities, it needs membership support to continue and to grow.

ACTFL for the past two years has worked with the Encyclopaedia Britannica in preparing the *Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education*. Two volumes have appeared to date and the third volume is in preparation. The theme of the third volume will be "Pluralism in Foreign Language Education" and was chosen by the committee because it reflects current emphasis upon the interrelatedness of foreign language to the other disciplines. It is an effort to make the *Review* increasingly responsive to the current issues in the field and increasingly practical in the types of help it provides for the teacher.

In all of these projects, we must have every member's support—we must know what you want, and know also that you will work with us to make your wishes into reality. Without you, ACTFL

will cease to exist. With you, ACTFL can—in a very positive sense—make the scene—and change it.

And I hope that we will be able to say of our efforts what Silberman says of the approach taken in the Carnegie study: "Our bias, it should be emphasized, was not that everything now being done is necessarily wrong; it was simply that everything now being done needs to be questioned. In an era of radical change such as the present, no approach is more impractical than one which takes the present arrangements and practices as given, asking only, "How can we do what we are now doing more effectively?" or "How can we bring the worst institutions up to the level of the best?" These questions need to be asked, to be sure; but one must also realize that the best may not be good enough and may, in any case, already be changing. And so we chose to work on two levels simultaneously: a level of short-run reform, where one works within the existing system, and a longer-run concern with the transition of the system."[1]

Our bias must be the same if the foreign language teaching profession and ACTFL are to cope with the changing scene.

[1] Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education*, (New York, 1970), p. 4.

The Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Instruction: Overview and Recent Developments

Guillermo del Olmo (Executive Committee, NJFLTA)

[In preparing for publication the text of the address given at the Colloquium, it became evident that its subject matter demanded full documentation and a more specific exposition than had been possible in the original version, which had been limited to a duration of thirty minutes. Accordingly, footnotes have been added and certain sections have been expanded, thus better implementing the author's objectives of throwing light on fundamental professional issues that are being rendered increasingly unintelligible.

The structure of the original address has been preserved, and none of the topics treated has been omitted. In carrying out his revisions, the author's overriding concern has been to avoid further confusing issues by being explicit in the justification of his claims and criticisms. (GdO)]

In offering an overview of the theory and practice of foreign language instruction during the last fifteen years or so, it is not my intention to attempt a detailed chronological description of events which are more or less well known. Rather, I intend to highlight certain developments which appear particularly significant from the vantage point of the 1970's, and to discuss their relevance in a historical perspective. The years that have gone by since 1958 could well be called our age of affluence[1] –a period of time during which government aid to foreign language education ran into the millions of dollars, and when the chairman of a foreign language department at a mid-western university could be heard to complain that he did not quite know how to get a qualified staff large enough to keep up with so many "acres of students." Perhaps it is fitting to start this retrospective look at our age of affluence by referring to some statistics.

In a recent address to the 1971 TESOL Convention (New Orleans, March 3-7), Kenneth Mildenberger estimated that between

[1] In 1965 Kenneth W. Mildenberger, for several years one of the chief administrators of this affluence, used the word in the title of an address to the Northeast Conference: "The Consequences of Prudent Affluence." The address was later published in *The Modern Language Journal* (XLIX), 6 [October 1965], pp. 349-53).

1958 and 1968 some two hundred and fifty million dollars were spent in support of foreign language education, from funds made available through the National Defense Education Act and subsequent legislation. As for the affluence in number of students, it is amply documented in the series of foreign language enrollment surveys conducted by the Modern Language Association of America since 1958.[2] One of these surveys shows that while the public secondary school population increased by about fifty per cent between 1960 and 1968, the foreign language enrollment grew by approximately seventy per cent (Kant, 1970, p. 400). As for higher education, until recently it was still possible to report growth in foreign language enrollments, although certain trends had been reversed by the fall of 1968 (ADFL Bulletin, II, 1, p. 64). Between 1960 and 1963 total institutional enrollments in higher education grew by 25.5%, while the enrollment figures in modern foreign languages showed an increase of 31.7%. Between 1965 and 1968, however, the figures were a 36% increase in total enrollments compared to a 10% increase in modern foreign languages.[3] Brod (1970, p. 341) speaks of "alarming downward trends" in public secondary school enrollments. He also discusses the decline in college foreign language enrollments as a percentage of total higher education figures, describing it as "one that has serious consequences for teachers on all levels" (id., p. 361). The period during which the profession, particularly at the college level, could count on a "captive audience" seems to be coming to an end, Brod adds.[4]

[2] The most convenient source of information (with a full bibliography) concerning these surveys is Chapter 15 of *The Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education,* Volume I, 1968, pp. 415-38: "Surveys and Reports on Foreign Language Enrollments" by John P. Dusel. See also Chapter 12 of Volume II (1970) of the Britannica Review, pp. 341-62: "Trends in Foreign Language Enrollments" by Richard I. Brod.

[3] "In summary, the percentage growth in total higher education enrollments is more than double the growth in modern foreign language enrollments (10%) between 1965 and 1968, if one uses *School and Society* reports for the former set of data; it is more than triple if one makes use of U.S.O.E. reports. In any case there is ample statistical evidence of an abrupt and substantial diminution of the role played by foreign languages in higher education between 1965 and 1968" (Brod, 1970, pp. 354-55).

[4] "We already know that the foreign language requirement is being dropped. A survey just now being conducted...indicates that 1970 foreign language enrollments are down 5% under 1968 enrollments in spite of a 7.5% increase in total student enrollment—an actual decrease of 12% or more. Moreover, 44% of the colleges and universities have dropped or reduced their foreign language degree requirements" (from

In retrospect, it is evident that this age of affluence descended much too suddenly upon the foreign language profession, a fact that has had certain negative consequences. Just as suddenly a new age of genteel poverty-hopefully nothing more than that—is dawning on us. This switch from one extreme to another is particularly regrettable. First we did not quite have time to assimilate and put to the best possible use all the resources made available in the relatively short period of ten years. As a profession we were not ready and able to discharge fully the responsibilities entailed by the preferred treatment we received. Ten years is too short a period of time to reform a profession from top to bottom, no matter how much money is made available—a truly professional ethos and the required competence cannot be bought on short order in the foreign *language* field—and the fact is that nothing short of total reform was the much needed goal which was actually envisaged by the leadership provided by certain exceptional individuals during the last fifteen years.

The abundance of students and dollars may have brought about a certain unwholesome condition, particularly since the system of values in higher education was not really affected by the responsibilities thrust upon us as a profession. If, in the recent past, we have been showing certain signs of intoxication from the overabundance of professional nutrients we have not been quite able to digest, at present we are beginning to show withdrawal symptoms that may become much worse, as the full impact of our new circumstances makes itself felt. Needless to say, this alternation between extremes actually works against the well-being of our profession and hinders progress in many fronts. Regrettable as this state of affairs is, it is also obvious that outside forces and factors beyond our control are at work, and we must face our changed circumstances. Nobody in particular can really be blamed for them, although the foreign *language* profession as a whole seems to have fallen short of the challenge and responsibility with which it has been faced since 1958, and which in certain respects it neither deserved nor wanted.

The end of our age of affluence was foreseen precisely by those individuals who were most active in bringing it about, and who worked the hardest in making it bear fruit. People like the late William R. Parker and Kenneth W. Mildenberger were much aware of the flimsy foundation on which they had been forced to build; they

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the Report of the Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association [General Session, 27 December 1970]. *PMLA*, 86, 3 [May 1971], p. 469).

also fully realized the adventitious nature of our prosperty. In 1965 Mildenberger warned us against the parochialism of our profession, which "could well turn out to be a fatal impediment to continued affluence, for we exist in an intricately interdependent educational world, often precariously and irrationally balanced" (Mildenberger, 1965, p. 353). In 1966 Parker went as far as openly questioning the existence of a *profession* of modern foreign language teachers, while stating that our prosperity was "basically illusive," on account of the lack of a "solid foundation." He exhorted us to "get to work on the foundation before the edifice falls" (Parker, 1966, p. 324). In his "Prospects for a Unified Profession" (an address delivered in December 1966), Mildenberger once again gave us fair warning: "But the recent progress and prosperity of modern foreign language study in American education should not be considered an unalterable condition. Our educational enterprise is changing very swiftly, and so too is our society" (Mildenberger, 1966/67, p. 169).

Almost fifteen years ago, Jack M. Stein, professor of German at Harvard, described us as "the amateur profession" (*German Quarterly*, 1958, pp. 133-37). In 1961 William G. Moulton (Princeton) gave his own interpretation of our amateur status, which he blamed on the lack of a theory of language learning of our own (Moulton, 1961, in Reichmann, 1970, p. 61). "Only then [when such a theory has been developed] can we lay claim to the professional status which ought rightly to be ours." Parker (1966, p. 324) decried the lack of a solid foundation for the profession, concluding that "the solid foundation is a practical consensus on the effective preparation of future teachers." How much progress our profession has made since 1958 is made clear by the Report of Working Committee I of the 1971 Northeast Conference: "We can only conclude that despite the professionalism of large numbers of individual foreign-language teachers, our foreign-language teaching 'profession' is an 'amateur profession' rather than truly a profession." The Report then lists eight requirements for full professsional status, concluding that the first giant step needed to meet the pressing challenges that confront us is "to decide not to continue as an amateur profession but to become a bona fide profession" (Reports 1971 NEC, pp. 29, 49-50). Let us hope that crisis and need will succeed where affluence failed.[5]

[5] The phrase "foreign language profession" or "teacher" should not be interpreted as referring exclusively to school teachers. It also refers to ten thousand teachers in colleges and universities, many of whom prefer to consider themselves "professors of literature," but who, in the

It certainly is not my intention, however, to give short shrift to the actual accomplishments of the last twenty years or so. The accomplishments of the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association (begun in 1952) are too numerous to be detailed and already part of the historical record. Thanks to our recent age of abundance—the decisive role that the FLP of the MLA played in bringing it about and giving it direction should not go without mention—we also have many resources to draw on in order to continue the task that was just started under such favorable circumstances. Our challenge now is to capitalize on the investment already made and to assume full responsibility for our professional well-being. Most of the textbooks now in use simply did not exist fifteen years ago, and they would not have been published then even if they had somehow been written. There are also tests available that could never have come into existence in the 1950's. Our tests and textbooks are still far from being what they should be, but they represent a degree of professional sophistication and know-how that could hardly be called representative of what was generally available to the profession before 1960. Certain established textbooks have undergone extensive revision in order to keep up with the new approaches and standards. The accomplishments of the last fifteen years can also be appreciated by thinking of the wealth of first-rate material now available for teacher training and for courses on methodology and applied linguistics, practically all of which has been written and published after 1958. Our professional organizations have been revitalized, and new ones have been created. We have good journals to serve the profession. And, of course, it would be impossible to even just list what was accomplished by the programs and projects sponsored under the National Defense Education Act and subsequent legislation (see Diekhoff, 1965, for the period 1958-1964). In listing these positive aspects of our recent past, perhaps I am not mentioning anything that is really new to you, but I feel obliged to do so in order to give balance to the somewhat negative import of what I have to say. Fleeting time, furthermore, weakens memory, changes perspectives, and renovates professional membership—many young faces in this audience remind me that we now have in the profession young colleagues that were enrolled in elementary and secondary school during most of the period I am

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nature of things, must also teach language classes, a task for which usually they have received no specific training. See "Profile of the Foreign-Language Teaching Profession, 1971" (Reports 1971 NEC, pp. 21-26). Cf. note 10, p. 23

discussing. Credit, then, must be given where it is due, and the significance of our accomplishments in the recent past must not be underestimated. But neither must we be blind to the magnitude of the task still ahead of us, and we must fully realize the nature of many negative factors in our present situation.

In this period of crisis and change, we may take our pick on how general or particular we want to be in dealing with the subject. We can couch our discussion in terms of an all-encompassing national crisis, we may limit ourselves to the educational crisis, or finally we may choose to deal with the theme of crisis within the confines of our profession. I am not the person best qualified to speak about these larger issues, nor is this the occasion to dwell on them. Yet, I cannot altogether ignore the outside forces at work, since they affect us very directly. As a profession we owe a great deal to the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association and to William Riley Parker's book *The National Interest and Foreign Languages.* But in this age of polarization, radicalism and verbal abuse, we do well to remember that for certain Americans (particularly the young) the expression "national interest" is anathema, since they understand it in the context of the Vietnam conflict. It is also a sign of the times that some individuals have not stopped short of referring to the MLA Foreign Language Program as an "instrument of American imperialism."[6] All this is grossly unfair, but it is also typical of the radicalism and spirit of exaggeration that are so much in evidence nowadays, perhaps as a reflection of the fact that great evils require drastic remedies. From the silent fifties we have moved into the obstreperous and ill-spoken sixties and seventies. In the early 1960's, our task looked simple in a certain sense, since it was easy for us to confine ourselves to the interests and problems of our profession: Our goal was to improve the teaching of foreign languages in schools and colleges. But now we

[6] Lest I be thought guilty of exaggeration, I refer the reader to the MLA Newsletter, Vol. 3, 2 (March 1971), p. 3, where the motion on the "People's Peace Treaty" proposed at the Business Meeting of December 28, 1970 is discussed. The nature of this motion prompted a disclaimer signed by a majority of the Executive Council, warning that "personal and corporate liability for charges of sedition and treason" might result from official implementation of the motion. See also the reprint from *"The Baltimore EveningSun"*(12/24/70)which appeared in *Accent on ACTFL* (Vol. 1, 3 [April 1971]), pp. 7-8, under the title "Signs of Retreat from the Hard Foreign Languages," and from which the following excerpt is taken: "On many campuses, the now-generation argument runs that language teaching's purpose is to train Americans for roles in further attempts at world domination."

must listen to other voices from outside the profession, and we simply cannot afford to close our ears to them.

If throughout most of the last decade and a half we could, by and large, afford the luxury of defining our own professional issues, wrestling with them in our own terms, how do all these issues look from the verdant womb of Consciousness III? What does the youth revolution have to say about requirements in general and about national priorities? A great deal of what I have to say about professional matters must also be interpreted against the background provided by the youth culture; otherwise, my remarks would be sadly out of context, and you would have every reason to dismiss them as actually superfluous. Charles A. Reich's book *The Greening of America* (1970) provides a most suitable and timely background for the discussion of our professional concerns. The subtitle of the book is "How the Youth Revolution is Trying to Make America Livable." An unsympathetic critic might add, "and doing it in, for sure." Whether we agree or disagree with Reich's views, his book gives us useful insights into certain forces and circumstances that are exerting pressure on the foreign language profession.

For the last fifteen years or so foreign languages have been in the limelight because, among other reasons, they were considered vital to the national interest. The new generation, Reich tells us, refuses to accept the goals or standards set by society, since "the individual, not society, is the reality" (p. 206). Academic requirements have until now provided us with a captive audience from which we have somewhat mindlessly profited, but the new students, who "see through the Establishment verities of our society with corrosive ease" (p. 205), are willing to fight the system. They accept no imposed system, insist on defining their own values, and will not countenance coercion or violence against any individual (pp. 208, 306, 334). Consequently, the young in our schools and colleges are against *all* curriculum requirements (p. 281). In their rejection of American meritocracy and its concomitants, our students also resent what they consider to be an antiquated grading system (p. 281)—indeed, the very nature of education has been challenged by them (p. 306). Reich (p. 184) speaks of "that crucial feeling of the new generation, betrayal." Feeling betrayed, the young fight for new values, a new way of life, and a world view very much unlike that of their elders. "Consciousness III is deeply suspicious of logic, rationality, analysis, and of principles" (p. 227). In his last chapter, the author denounces our present ideas of education as "absurdly narrow and primitive for the kinds of tasks men face" (p. 314).

Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education by Charles E. Silberman, also published in 1970, is another book without which it is impossible to realize fully the situation in which we find ourselves as professionals in search of a profession, beset by problems of all kinds. Some of us might feel tempted to dismiss Reich's strictures and his characterization of the young as the opinions and subjective judgements of a self-appointed, middle-aged prophet of the youth culture. But we should not be too hasty in questioning the objectivity and accuracy of Reich's book. Mr. Silberman, born in 1925 and a member of the Board of Editors of *Fortune* Magazine, can hardly be considered a representative figure of the youth culture. Yet, in discussing our "pervasive sense of crisis" and what he calls "the central paradox of American life" (Silberman, pp. 19ff.), he confirms, from a more critical standpoint,[7] many of the basic points that Reich makes in his study. What Reich has to say about education agrees with Silberman's diagnosis of the ills of American education. As for the "new" students, the following words could have been written by Reich:

> Part of what we must confront is the fact that many of the young are rejecting values, goals, and identities we have always taken for granted– values, goals, and identitities we have regarded as intrinsic parts of the social fabric. What is new, it must be understood, is not the generational conflict itself. . . .In the United States. . . .young people rarely challenged the legitimacy of their parents', or their university's, or their government's authority. They claimed that authority had been abused or that the wrong people were exercising it; at times they simply defied authority. They rarely questioned the legitimacy of authority itself.
>
> They are questioning it now! Indeed, they are questioning not only the legitimacy but the very concept of authority (Silberman, pp. 23-24).

In reading Silberman, the significance of Reich's book is enhanced. Whether the reader agrees or not with Reich's panegyric of Consciousness III–whether he shares or not the author's faith in the new dawning–is actually irrelevant. Both of these books ought to be

[7] See, for instance, Silberman's discussion of "the inability of so many of the young (and so many of the would-be young) to distinguish between authority and power" (pp. 333-36), as well as the distinction he makes between grading and evaluation (pp. 347, 410-11). Unlike Reich, the author does take issue with some aspects of the "new" students' reaction against "academic coercion." He refers, for instance, to "the 'let everyone do his own thing' anarchy of no requirements" (Silberman, p. 410). Silberman, however, does not fail to recognize fully that the young are reacting justifiably against abuses and shortcomings of an educational system that is in need of a top-to-bottom revamping.

required reading for teachers at all levels, whether young, middle-aged or old.

Silberman's book practically says nothing directly about foreign language study in American schools and colleges, but what he has to say about education in general is essential to gain a clear understanding of our recent past, present problems and uncertain future. Many remarks he makes on different aspects of American education are more relevant to our professional concerns than what is often published in our own journals.

Silberman makes clear two important facts about the late 1950's and 60's. The first one is that these years "saw one of the largest and most sustained educational reform movements in American history, an effort that many observers. . . .thought would transform the schools." The second fact that the author makes painfully clear is that nothing of the sort has actually happened; "the reform movement has produced innumerable changes, and yet the schools themselves are largely unchanged" (Silberman, pp. 158-59).

We foreign language teachers often lose sight of the fact that the audiolingual approach was, and still is, an integral part of the reform movement in foreign language education—a movement that found eloquent expression in Nelson Brooks' indictment of our profession in 1955: "For the present state of affairs I accuse the leaders in our profession who have shown too little concern for the welfare of the youthful language learner. I accuse the professional organizations that have shown a bland unwillingness to deal with problems that are crucial. . . .I accuse both schools and colleges of inexcusable ignorance of what their students' language learning experience will be in the future or has been in the past" (Modern Language Association, *FL Bulletin,* 42 [December 1955], p. 9; quoted by Bolinger, 1971, p. 149).

In Silberman's judgement, "the curriculum reform movement has also been blunted on the classroom door" (id., p. 170). He does not refer specifically to foreign languages, but, to anyone acquainted with the history and present state of our profession, it is obvious that what he has to say applies to us particularly well.

At the beginning of this talk I hinted that in our age of affluence we may have tried to accomplish the impossible. The regrettable thing is not that funds were generously made available to attempt the impossible, but that we have not had sufficient time to add a significant qualitative dimension to our quantitative approach to curriculum reform. Like everything human, the audiolingual approach has flaws in it, but its potential for quality has not begun

to make itself sufficiently felt. By and large, poor traditional teaching has been replaced by poor (often worse) audiolingual teaching. I find no justification for the present state of affairs by looking back to conditions in the 1940's and early 50's. It is true that nowadays we are much better off, but the quality of learning and the effectiveness of our teaching still need a great deal of improvement to be considered satisfactory. It is quality in absolute terms that we must strive for, not just relative improvement or simple change in our teaching methods and techniques.

To me the true significance of the audiolingual approach lies in the kinds of questions it has forced the foreign language profession to ask and in its being the spearhead of reform and not necessarily in the answers it has tentatively suggested, all of which are open to improvement and refinement, as we gain more and better insights into the nature of language, learning and motivation, and as we become more sophisticated and effective in making such insights bear fruit in the classroom. If we must not look back to the 1940's and 50's in order to take comfort in our relative progress, we are, nonetheless, justified in remembering that the audiolingual approach represents a dividing line, as far as our profession is concerned. It was a bold, new departure and a reaction against our professional past. It set new goals for us and for our students, and it presented the profession with a formidable challenge which is still with us. Indeed, our present-day challenge is to make certain that the reform movement does fulfill its promise. We have the wherewithal to bring this about, but it is not at all certain that history will not report as a noble failure all the hard work of the last twenty years. It will all depend on whether we are able or not to promote significant change in our professional practices, attitudes and ethos. A start has been made, but, given the nature and magnitude of the task attempted, it must be recognized as little more than that.

Should the import of my argument be construed as blaming foreign language teachers at all levels for failing to implement properly the audiolingual approach and do justice to the reform movement entailed by it? The answer is both "yes" and "no," and the reasons for my opinion can be better understood by keeping in mind what Silberman has to say throughout his book about teachers of all subjects and about methodology in general. Above all, this author provides us with a most significant and revealing historical perspective about the nature and vicissitudes of educational reform. At present we are sorely in need of such perspective.

Although I readily admit that the audiolingual approach as so

far developed has certain flaws, unlike certain critics I cannot hold the approach responsible for the failure to improve significantly enough the quality of foreign language teaching and learning. The reason for my position is very simple: I have visited too many classes at all levels, and I know that more often than not the audiolingual approach is not properly, efficiently and effectively implemented. Changing the textbook does not necessarily change the teacher and his ability to bring about the right kind of learning, particularly if the teacher has been bludgeoned into adopting new materials and into "changing" his pedagogy. (Under such circumstances, "change" often amounts to little more than paying lip service to current professional shibboleths, or to their mindless acceptance, which may be even more harmful.) Once in a while, though, I also see individual classes or whole departments in schools or colleges where real language learning is taking place. The approach is supposed to be the same; but the difference in results is striking.

But the answer to the question about responsibility and failure is also "no," because I fully agree with Silberman *(op. cit.*, p. 265; see also p. 413) who quotes Dewey to the effect that genius among teachers "is as rare as genius in other realms of human activity. Education is, and forever will be, in the hands of ordinary men and women."[8] This does not mean that I think it takes genius to make the audiolingual approach work. What I am suggesting is that the profession has not been able to overcome its failures in teaching training. It takes more than millions of dollars and ten years of diligent, professional activity to train effective teachers that can really do justice to what is known about the nature of language and the psychology of language learning: It takes a tradition of good teacher training. But the truth of the matter is that institutions of higher learning have failed to discharge their responsibilities to teachers and to all kinds of students. Again I refer you to Silberman for documentation and further discussion (see particularly Chapters 9, 10 and 11), but I could easily add from ten to twenty titles that deal with the crisis in higher education. In that list there would appear books with titles such as Harold Taylor's *Students Without*

[8] Cf. also: "In the last analysis, what makes these programs, and others like them, succeed is less their teachers' talent or novel curriculum than the teachers' unshakable conviction that their students can learn. The self-fulfilling prophecy works in a positive as well as negative direction" (Silberman, pp. 97-98). "If these schools succeed, therefore, it is not because they are staffed by extraordinary teachers, but because ordinary teachers are performing in an extraordinary way" (*id.*, p. 103).

Teachers: The Crisis in the University. Silberman, furthermore, makes perfectly clear that the blame for the failure to educate teachers properly is equally shared by the faculties of education and the faculties of arts and sciences (see *op. cit.*, pp. 377, 378, 424, 430 and *passim*).

My answer, then, is also in the negative because teachers have not been receiving the training and the education they are entitled to, and because they often have to work under conditions that make good teaching impossible.[9] There is more to modern language teaching than a few recipes about how to do things in the classroom. To implement modern approaches to language teaching successfully takes more than joining the bandwagon and paying lip service to whatever slogans happen to be in fashion. It takes a deep-rooted, correct attitude towards the task at hand, and it takes solid knowledge about the nature of human language and the learning process. In the words of Alfred Hayes, teachers are "the indispensable link between theory and practice in fostering learning. To play this role effectively.....they must somehow cease to regard 'methods' as matters of 'belief,' while learning to understand and to question the assumptions underlying suggested approaches" (Valdman, 1966, p. vi). It takes far more than the 600 NDEA institutes conducted in the past to erase the consequences of appalling professional neglect and incompetence in teacher education over most of the last seventy-five years.[10]

It must also be kept in mind that the best training a teacher can receive with regard to foreign language methodology is to have learned a foreign language through proper training under classroom conditions. "While teachers-to-be start out with a relatively accurate picture of what most teachers do, what most teachers do is not what they *should* be doing. Unless prospective teachers are given alterna-

[9] "If placed in an atmosphere of freedom and trust, if treated as professionals and as people of worth, teachers behave like the caring, concerned people they would like to be. They, no less than their students, are victimized by the way in which schools are currently organized and run" (Silberman, p. 142).

[10] "One of the strangest and strongest traditions of American higher education is the one that holds, implicitly if not explicitly, that those who teach students below the age of eighteen require special preparation for teaching, whereas those who teach students eighteen or older do not. The notion is patently absurd. . . .If there is any case at all for giving educators some preparation for teaching over and above an education in the liberal arts–and clearly there is–it applies to those who teach in colleges and universities no less than to those who teach in the public schools" (Silberman, p. 509).

tive pictures of what teaching and learning can be, along with the techniques they need to implement them, they are almost bound to teach in the same way as their teachers taught them" (Silberman, pp. 471-72).[11] How many of our practicing teachers can look back to their school years and say that they learned how to implement modern approaches to language learning because as students they were subjected to them? Of course, I am not holding most of you responsible for having been born before 1945. My point is that the reform movement of the last fifteen years can only be considered in its infancy. The essential question is whether it will be allowed to reach adulthood. Where do we go from here, and how do we cope with the forces buffeting our profession?

Several of the statements I have made concerning our age of affluence could be interpreted as negative judgements on certain aspects of our recent history. If that is what they really are, I must at this point make absolutely clear that I am not questioning the wisdom of the "crash-and-cash" program initiated in 1958 under government sponsorship. It is true we tried to do through revolution (or should we say "forced evolution"?) and in the short span of ten years or so what should have been accomplished through evolution over fifty years–provided, of course, that the evolutionary process had had its inception around 1900. Since such was not the case, circumstances fully justified the all-out, intensive effort that was undertaken. But revolution is a wasteful mode of social change, and, in the long run, it may prove both inefficient and ineffective. Reich (p. 297) points out that no real change can take place unless there is also a change in the consciousness of the people; in other words, "social change cannot be accomplished without the support of an appropriate consciousness in the people. Mere political change, mere

[11] See also what Silberman (pp. 489-90) has to say about the knowledge and insight that teachers should acquire in learning subject matter itself, "if colleges and universities were as they should be." Although absolute nonsense, within the foreign language profession it is standard operating procedure to have future teachers do their student teaching in classrooms that controvert everything that is taught in the methods course (*cf.* Silberman, p. 298). For a description and discussion of this problem, see del Olmo and del Olmo, 1968. Our "compilation of observations made while engaged in teacher training and supervision" (in the state of New Jersey, but, of course, such conditions could easily be documented anywhere else) reflect the situation as it was between 1964 and 1968. Three years later, the same conditions obtain, and there is no real reason to think that the situation will be any different ten years from now, although I sincerely hope that time will prove me wrong in making this prediction.

alterations in the law, in structure, or in government power, cannot accomplish basic reform" (Reich, p. 60). In writing these words, the author is actually referring to the New Deal, which "was accepted as a doctor is accepted, in an hour of fear and need," but the conceptual essence of his words applies equally well to the reform movement in foreign languages that I am discussing, and throws light on that change without real change noted by Silberman (see above, p. 19). Many foreign language teachers were sent to summer institutes to be retrained and to have their language competence upgraded. Having myself spent five summers working in such institutes, and having visited several others for purposes of evaluation, I must recognize the fact that many participants of institutes were simply exposed to the "new faith," without a real change of consciousness actually taking place. (Again, this does not mean that I consider the institute program superfluous or an absolute failure; given the circumstances, the program was well conceived, a noble and needed attempt to accomplish the impossible.)That basic reform was not really accomplished by the institute program is also shown by the well-known fact that many (I would venture to say most) participating institutions of higher learning failed to become models of the kind of foreign language instruction they were expected to promote in the institutes financed through government funds. Somehow, what was good for the goose (preaching the "new faith" to secondary school teachers during the summer) was not good enough for the gander (effective implementation of the new approaches and theories at the college level during the regular school year). Besides, attendance at an institute in no way could guarantee a change for the better in the classroom behavior of individual teachers.

Again what Silberman has to say about educational reform in general proves most illuminating in trying to understand the audiolingual revolution of the last decade. Silberman warns his readers about the danger "that the American penchant for fads could lead to promotion of informal education as the panacea for all educational ills." He also quotes Dewey's warning of 1930: "If progressive schools become complacent with existing accomplishments, unaware of the slight foundation of knowledge upon which they rest, and careless regarding the amount of study of the laws of growth that remains to be done, a reaction against them is sure to take place" (Silberman, pp. 318-19). To me it seems quite obvious that the audiolingual approach did become a victim of the American penchant for fads, thus being turned into the mythical panacea it

could never in fact be. Dewey's warning about complacency and reaction is also well illustrated by the recent history of foreign language teaching. In another chapter, Silberman points out that the popularity of Dewey's writings in the twenties and thirties and the impressive spread of progressivism in this country were factors that "contributed to its demise in the decades following, when the approach was vulgarized beyond recognition by teachers, principals, and superintendents who mouthed the rhetoric but understood neither the spirit nor the underlying theory" (Silberman, p. 283). The fact that reform in England came more slowly than in the United States is also mentioned as the possible explanation for the fact that the English have succeeded in accomplishing significant educational reform, whereas Americans have failed in the task.

These are not the only parallels that the reader can find between Silberman's discussion of education in general and the events that have taken place in the foreign language field over the last two decades. Many more revealing parallels can be found in *Crisis in the Classroom,* but I must content myself with referring those interested to Silberman's work.[12] It must be emphasized that the author does not really devote attention in this book to foreign language education. The subject is not listed in the reasonably detailed index, and reading the book from cover to cover reveals only three specific references to foreign languages. Of these three, two are simply anecdotal in nature. One anecdote (p. 350) reflects a positive but non-typical experience with Spanish. Mention is made of J.B. Conant's recommendation of a four-year sequence of foreign language study in high school, only to observe that "students can be, and usually are, as illiterate in a foreign language after four years as they are after two" (p. 344), although the author's real point is that educational quality cannot be measured in terms of time. The second anecdotal item is the explanation why the foreign language requirement has not disappeared at a university where all other distribution requirements have been abolished: "Eliminating the language requirement would eliminate most of the language department's enrollment and thus leave the university with a number of unemployed but tenured professors" (p. 392).

But the real significance of Silberman's book, as far as foreign language teachers are concerned, lies precisely in the fact that the

[12] In addition to the pages already cited (some times two or more pertinent remarks appear on the same page), I would refer the reader to pp. 168, 172, 179-82, 217, 272, 374 and 427 of *Crisis in the Classroom.*

author provides the essential context (education in general) and a historical perspective for the events and theoretical developments that over the last twenty years have taken place in foreign languages. My first-hand experience (amply corroborated by that of other colleagues) and involvement force upon me the significance for our profession of many pages of Silberman's work, thus leading me to point out parallels that lie beyond the scope of the author's central concerns, but which are of the utmost and timely importance for us. It is hard to believe that the author can be so impressively relevant to a field of education that he hardly mentions.[13]

[13] Only in one instance do I find Silberman's book somewhat misleading with respect to developments in the foreign language field. In discussing the activities of the reformers of the 1950's and 60's, the author criticizes them for (1) placing "almost all their emphasis on subject matter," while ignoring the needs of individual learners; (2) neglecting "to study the earlier attempts at curriculum reform," and tending "to ignore the harsh realities of classroom and school organization"; (3) implicitly assuming "that teaching and learning are merely opposite sides of the same coin." Up to this point, I am willing to admit the relevance of Silberman's criticisms to the foreign language field, although some qualifications would also be in order. But, then, the author goes on to state that the reformer's "error reflected academic hubris as well: not content with ignoring the classroom teacher, the reformers, in effect, tried to bypass the teacher altogether. Their goal, sometimes stated, sometimes implicit, was to construct 'teacher-proof' materials that would 'work' whether teachers liked the materials or not or taught them well or badly" (pp. 180-81). In the foreign language field, the reformers certainly did not try to bypass the teacher altogether, since from the very beginning there was close collaboration between school teachers and university personnel; as a matter of fact, school teachers were given the responsibility of directing certain projects in which university specialists collaborated. The institute program was an attempt to change the ways in which teachers teach. As for "changing the ways in which schools operate" (p. 181), this certainly could not be considered the responsibility of foreign language teachers, although specific individuals who were not afraid to fight for reform succeeded in carrying out needed changes in administration. At present we hear a great deal about what is wrong with the so-called "audiolingual method," but sufficient attention is not being devoted to what is wrong with the ways in which schools, universities and academic departments operate and to the fact that through design, incompetence or lack of understanding "the classroom teacher usually is in an almost perfect position to sabotage a curriculum he finds offensive" (p. 181) or with which he is not sufficiently familiar. The Pennsylvania Foreign Language Project, for instance, was meant to assess the effectiveness of the audiolingual approach in the American secondary school, without distorting the essential characterists of real school situations (i.e., how schools operate and how teachers teach even when they think they are teaching audiolingually). (See Smith, 1970, pp. 1, 2, 7.) The actual significance of the Pennsylvania Project is greatly diminished once we realize the implications of Silberman's remark: "But without changing the ways in which schools operate and

In looking at the profession in the general context of education and from the perspective outlined above, I have already started to explain some of the reasons for the confusion and controversies that are so evident nowadays in the theory of foreign language instruction. Some of our most virulent critics, none of which is really a foreign language teacher, simply do not seem to be sufficiently acquainted with the history and traditions of our profession as well as with the realities of our classrooms. Because of their evident lack of familiarity with the historical record as well as with all pertinent aspects of present-day reality, some of these critics tend to blame us or our methodology for imaginary crimes against our students. At best some of these critics are seeing half of the evidence available, and are unable to come to terms with the real situation as a whole. On the other hand, some members of our profession, perhaps on account of their youth or limited professional experience, are equally guilty of ignoring the historical record and of failing to do justice to the rich professional experience of the last fifteen years. And, of course, they are even more blind to the conditions that existed before the late 1950's. Through lack of historical perspective and because of a quite limited acquaintance with the wealth of information at present available, some language teachers are still engaged in the perennial search for new and magic methods that will solve all their problems. They still prefer to *believe* in methods rather

teachers teach, changing the curriculum alone does not have much effect." After all the attention the notorious report has received in educational circles, it is quite a letdown to have the author of the report flatly state in an appendix written in 1969: "At this point, may I especially commend Emma Birkmaier, Dale Lange, and James Dodge for their care in pointing out what the Pennsylvania studies *do not* prove. They do not prove anything. Few reviewers, with the exception of Valette and Carroll, are interested in what our reports do say—and they do say a great deal" (Smith, 1970, p. 374; italics in the original). It seems to me that regardless of what the reports have to say (this is not the occasion to discuss the significance of their message), the Pennsylvania Project may have proven one thing: There are better ways of spending over $300.000 (*id.*, p. 7) for the sake of improving foreign language instruction. (Mackey [1965/67, pp. ix-x] and Jakobovits [1968, pp. 189, 208-09; 1970, p. 26] reject the notion that one method of teaching can be proven superior to another through the kind of controlled experimentation and evaluation of which the Pennsylvania Project constitutes a typical example. For reasons of chronology, Mackey certainly could not have had the PP in mind, and Jakobovits does not specifically refer to it.) The Pennsylvania studies seem to have been the last major fling of our age of abundance. Hindsight, indeed, is easier than foresight. Still, we must draw our lessons from past professional experience.

than to examine them objectively, or to acquaint themselves with the professional and technical literature that will help them understand the real nature of the problem of methodology. And, as usual, attendance at professional meetings will reveal that some of us, as well as some of our critics, are unwittingly reporting as new discoveries or experiences that have been part of the record for quite some time. A sound historical perspective and first-hand acquaintance with our profession are very much needed in order to see through the reigning confusion.

The very popularity of the term "audiolingual method" has been for some time now contributing in no small measure to a cacophonous dialogue of the deaf that can hardly be said to be what circumstances demand. A whole mechanistic philosophy combined with all sorts of rather mystifying notions has been read by some into the term "audiolingual," when the historical record shows that the word was simply meant to replace the awkward "oral-aural" of former years. The so-called "audiolingual method" has also been saddled, without the necessary qualifications, with the very same behavioristic psychology that has been so thoroughly discredited by the attacks of Noam Chomsky and his followers. On the other hand, not long ago you heard Nelson Brooks specifically reject the ascription of Skinnerian influence to audiolingualism (Brooks, 1969).[14] Wilga Rivers (1968a, 1968b) did succeed in making

[14] Cf. Jakobovits, 1969, p. 437: "These principles [the major assumptions 'upon which the habit-skill method is based' as summarized in 1966 by Bernard Spolsky] *are said* to be derived from Harvard psychologist Skinner's behavior theory" (emphasis added). See also Jerry Fodor's description and analysis of Skinnerian psychology and the operant model of language (Fodor, 1970), keeping in mind that this second author is careful not to mention any specific approach or method of language teaching. Certainly it is not my intention to deny the fact that American psychologists have gone to certain extremes "in reducing all learning to Skinnerian operant-conditioning and attempting (foolishly) to extrapolate as Skinner did [in *Verbal Behavior*, 1957], from bar-pressing behavior in rats to human verbal behavior" (Wolfe, 1970, p. 280). What I deny is the fact that the proponents and practitioners of the audiolingual approach—many of whom are foreign language teachers trained in the humanities— were naive enough (or, if you prefer, sophisticated enough) to adopt the Skinnerian model, and then slavishly build on it. Yet, the myth persists in the face of explicit denials such as Brooks's and mine. F. Rand Morton, incidentally, has never claimed to be a proponent of the audiolingual approach, nor can he be considered to be one by anybody who takes the trouble to read Morton's articles on language teaching.

On the other hand it cannot be denied that certain audiolingual techniques (specific techniques, not the overall approach) can be

perfectly clear that in foreign language learning the notions of habit formation, rule-governed behavior, and creativity in language use are all perfectly compatible and necessary, thus showing how misleading some of Chomsky's pronouncements can be for foreign language teaching, when not properly understood in the combined contexts of transformational-generative theory and foreign language methodology. In addition, Miss Rivers' book *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* throws light on the misleading nature of the dichotomy that some writers insist on establishing between two clearly differentiated approaches to language teaching, one inspired by "the audiolingual habit theory," the other based on "the cognitive code-learning theory." No matter how appealing to the mind of the theoretician or experimenter such a construct proves, the classroom practitioner must reject it as actually irrelevant to teaching and harmful to the learning process–even if it could really be implemented, Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968) notwithstanding. *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* also helps clear the confusion created by Miss Rivers' earlier work *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher* (1964), which has been misunderstood by some people as a denunciation of audiolingualism and further confirmation of the relevance to language teaching of transformational-generative theory. This, of course, reveals more about the preconceived notions of certain readers than about the real intentions of the author, for there was no valid reason not to realize that Miss Rivers' book of 1964 was a much needed critical examination of issues, and not a partisan attack on current theories of foreign language instruction. Unfortunately, Miss Rivers' works can hardly be called representative of what is being published in the field of foreign language methodology.

Further conceptual and semantic confusion is created by the misuse of the term "method," as well as by blindness to the notions of "approach" and "technique." I do not want to go here into details that I have discussed at length elsewhere (del Olmo, 1968, 1970), but it is evident to me that unless we learn to discriminate among the

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interpreted in terms of Skinnerian theory by anyone knowledgeable enough to perform the task. Such techniques, however, have been employed, and are still being used, by teachers because they produce tangible results, and not because they are backed by Skinnerian psychology. The audiolingual approach cannot be reduced to strictly behavioristic principles. The fact that this approach has been developed and practiced by humanists who also happen to be foreign language teachers is always overlooked by psycholinguists. I suggest that humanists have never felt the need to rebel against Skinner's theory for the simple reason that they never really subjected themselves to the yoke of behaviorism.

notions of approach, method and technique, we shall continue to misunderstand one another, as well as the real nature of the most important issues in the foreign language field. The audiolingual approach exists: It is based on a set of assumptions concerning the nature of language, culture, language learning and teaching. It is rather general in nature, flexible, and in process of further developemnt and refinement. *The* "audiolingual method" that we hear so much about simply does not exist. One single method cannot do justice to the needs of different kinds of learners (children, teen-agers, adults), or to the diverse circumstances under which foreign language instruction takes place. Teaching English as a second language to adult foreigners in this country, and at the rate of four or six hours a day, requires a specific method. Such a method cannot be used to teach Spanish to secondary school students under normal classroom conditions. The methods must be different, but the approach and many of the techniques can certainly be the same. Although most often overlooked, this conceptual differentiation must constantly be kept in mind in reading professional literature, and in discussing teaching problems.

In 1892, William James clearly explained the difference between approach (he used the concept, not the word) and method. See Silberman (pp. 427-28), who shows that Harvey Brooks, the philosopher Josiah Royce and John Dewey also understood the nature of this fundamental distinction. The passages quoted by the author contain terms such as "body of knowledge," "science," "rules of practice," "methods" and "art of teaching." The concept of approach is to be related to the first two terms, while the last three have to do with the concept of method. These two pages of Silberman's book clearly suggest the solution to the problem of what is the nature of "applied linguistics," a problem which, perhaps, the structuralists did not see clearly—at least, it is fashionable nowadays to question the legitimacy of applied linguistics. The transformationalists, on the other hand, can be accused of rendering the question quite intractable. At any rate, one may conclude that although linguistics is a science, there can be no science of applied linguistics. The applied linguist is really a practitioner of the art of teaching, whether he realizes it or not. As James put it, "a science only lays down lines within which the rules of the art must fall, laws which the follower of the art must not transgress; but what particular thing he shall positively do within those lines is left exclusively to his own genius. . . .And so everywhere the teaching must *agree* with the psychology, but need not necessarily be the only kind of teaching

that would so agree; for many diverse methods of teaching may equally well agree with psychological laws" (Silberman, p. 427). (For a discussion of the concept of approach in the context of foreign language instruction, see del Olmo, 1970, pp. 37-38).

Particular care in the use of the key terms "audiolingual," "approach" and "method" is needed because of the revolutionary developments that have taken place in the fields of linguistics and psychology over the last fifteen years. Some writers insist in pitting structural linguistics against transformational-generative theory, and behavioristic psychology against cognitive or mentalistic approaches. As language teachers, we must work toward a pragmatic synthesis that answers our needs. To have a clear understanding of the issues involved is sufficient for us; we need not become involved in technical controversies among linguists and psychologists, as long as such controversies are confined to the psycholinguistic disciplines and do not invade our areas of professional competence. We cannot become partisans of what John B. Carroll has called "the new orthodoxy"; that is, a mentalistic approach to linguistics and psychology that entails a rather drastic rejection of earlier approaches.[15] In a paper read at the TESOL Convention in New Orleans (March 3-7, 1971), Carroll pleaded for a workable synthesis in the theory and practice of language instruction, and warned against the developing new orthodoxy. We foreign language professionals must assume responsibility for our own theories and methodology, while fully realizing that the psycholinguistic controversies of the last few years have had a profound influence on the development and discussion of foreign language methodology. To be masters in our own house is becoming increasingly difficult.

[15] Cf. Bolinger, 1971,, p. 155: "God knows the last thing we need now is a Messiah for some new method that will brand all dialogs and structure drills as antiquated and lead us to the promised land of transcendental cogitation about Language with a capital L, as some of our new mentalists seem inclined to do."

The paper that Carroll read at the TESOL Convention was published in the June 1971 issue of the *TESOL Quarterly*. In this paper the author states his belief that "the opposition between 'rule-governed behavior' and 'habits' is false and specious." He, then, adds: "I know that in saying this I subject myself to attack. I will be accused of not having read. . .Chomsky's (1959) famous review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*. To anyone who might thus accuse me, I would recommend the reading of a reply to this review by [Kenneth] MacCorquodale (1970) in a recent issue of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* [13, 1 (January 1970), pp. 83-99]."

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Practically every single tenet of the audiolingual approach has been questioned or rejected by the new orthodoxy. Many of these critics are actually fighting their own straw men rather than the real audiolingual approach. Lack of acquaintance with the realities of the profession is quite evident in the writings of others. The fact is that no clear-cut alternative to the audiolingual approach has emerged so far. There have been refinements and changes in emphasis, all of them welcome and needed, but no completely new departures in methodology are known to me thus far, several claims to the contrary notwithstanding.[16]

In the case of some individuals, there is no question in my mind that their reaction against audiolingualism has its roots in a slavish and misguided adherence to certain "articles of faith" and practices that should have been examined critically and modified or rejected–as indeed they were by other practitioners–since they really belong to what we may call "folk audiolingualism," in keeping with Hoeningswald's notion of "folk linguistics" (Jakobovits, 1968, p. 214) and the earlier concept of "folk etymology." Jilted lovers who have loved not wisely but too well tend to be bitter about the former object of their affections. In keeping with Hayes's injunction quoted earlier (p. 22), the rank and file of our profession must become better informed with respect to theoretical issues and their relevance (or lack therof) to classroom practices, in order to be able to exercise critical judgement concerning methodology. This, however, is more easily said than done, since very little real *knowledge* is readily available concerning the theory and practice of foreign language instruction. A great deal of *information* is constantly being made available in journals and books, but, unlike actual knowledge, this superabundance of information tends to create confusion more than

[16] Dr. Caleb Gattegno's "Silent Way" (see Gattegno, 1963, although this early exposition does not quite do justice in style and content to the author's thinking) might be considered a new departure at least as far as the implications of the name are concerned, as well as the extremes to which its proponents go in order to teach silently. Nonetheless, I remain totally unconvinced by the demonstrations I have seen of the "Silent Way." Most of the principles behind Dr. Gattegno's "way" are very sound, and I readily accept them as part of any up-to-date approach to language teaching. What I reject is some of the specific techniques that Dr. Gattegno has devised to implement his theories, and the claims that are made concerning the magic properties of teaching foreign languages by speaking as little as possible. One technique cannot be turned into an approach to language teaching–a fact that some of the proponents of the "Silent Way" are naive enough not to realize.

anything else. And there is no reason whatsoever to believe that the confusion will be cleared away in the near future. Given these circumstances, it is essential not to lose sight of the really fundamental issues, and to throw as much light on them as possible. Some of the purveyors of information are actually hindering progress, precisely because they fail to understand the real issues, or actually refuse to consider them in all their complexity.

Since the audiolingual approach was never meant to be a rigid body of doctrine, but rather a general methodology—based on linguistics, psychology, cultural anthropology, and the experience of foreign language professionals and humanists—designed to teach all four skills, and since, by definition, such an approach is receptive to innovation, one may well wonder whether an alternative to an approach thus conceived can really be found. Perhaps some day a new name will become popular, the name is not the real thing; what really matters is the broad, fundamental principles on which foreign language methodology must rest.

One of the disconcerting factors about the psycholinguists' assault on audiolingualism is that it is entirely negative; that is, they deny the validity of certain basic tenets, such as the supposedly Skinnerian orientation of the audiolingual approach, but then stop short of offering alternative formulations. In basic agreement with William James, the position of psycholinguists such as Chomsky (1966, p. 44), Fodor (1970, pp. 145-48) and Langacker (1971, p. 37) is that linguistics and psychology have nothing to say about the methods used in foreign language teaching. At the New Orleans TESOL Convention, the statement was made that "the game in language teaching is that we don't know anything about anything, but we keep talking about it to see if something comes out of the talking." This, of course, is a counsel of despair that foreign language teachers cannot accept, since we have our practical experience to rely on, and to back up our conceptions of methodology.

If linguistics and psychology have nothing to say about the methods and techniques used in foreign language teaching, it is up to us to ferret out of these two disciplines whatever insights we need to improve our theory and practice of foreign language instruction. Our approaches, methods and techniques are our responsibility. Nobody denies that linguistics throws light on the nature of language and on the structure and functioning of specific languages. Psychology has contributions to make concerning motivation, perception and the nature of cognitive processes. The more psycholinguists discover or theorize about these matters, the more we can profit from their

findings. We must take with a grain of salt the modest, noncommittal stance that has become fashionable among certain psycholinguists.

I must complete the picture by pointing out that not all psychologists or linguists deny the relevance of psycholinguistic research to foreign language instruction. John B. Carroll has for many years been trying to analyze for foreign language teachers the implications of current psycholinguistic research.

Leon A. Jakobovits—"probably the best spokesman of generative-transformationally orientated psycholinguistic thinking in the area of Foreign Language Teaching" (Politzer, 1971, p. 195)—stands in a class by himself, given his willingness to more than make up for his colleagues' affluence in furnishing advice, and on account of his penchant for delivering himself of opinions on questions of foreign language pedagogy, and even on questions of professional policy in the foreign language field. (In this respect he is more representative of the role structural linguists have played in the past—a role which, in principle, I do not find objectionable, but which is usually eschewed by linguists of the transformational-generative school.) By profession, Professor Jakobovits is a psychologist, or, if you will, a psycholinguist. He is a prolific writer who does not hesitate to make value judgements concerning foreign language teaching by extrapolating from his psycholinguistic expertise, and by relying on what must be, in my judgement, faulty acquaintance with the history, theory and practice of foreign language instruction. He, furthermore, confesses to a willingness to publish material "polemical in nature," without attempting "to present all sides of the issue" (Jakobovits, 1970a, p. xv). There is no question, at any rate, about the cavalier attitude evident in his writings towards the reform movement in foreign languages of the last two decades, and about his bias against it. He, nonetheless, believes that "the teacher and educational administrator have the responsibility of justifying their instructional methods and procedures on their sole merit, in terms of their consequences, and not in terms of their congruity or affinity with a particular theory" (*id.*, 1970b, p. 27).

It is Professor Jakobovits's considered opinion that the audiolingual or "New Key" approach is to blame for the crisis in foreign languages that we are living through (*id.*, 1969, *passim*; 1970c, p. 65). He also has very specific opinions on what kinds of courses we ought to teach, and how we ought to test for language learning (*id.*, 1969, *passim*; 1970a, Chapter IV). He further claims that there exists evidence which "shows that the audiolingual method has failed to produce meaningful foreign language achievement in the vast

majority of students exposed to it" (1970a, p. 26). "Teaching methods which do not work should be abandoned" (*loc. cit.*). Mr. Jakobovits regrets the polemical debate aroused by his attacks on "the audiolingual method," and exonerates its proponents of any blame "for the inefficacy of their approach to Foreign Language Teaching," giving them "credit for the forthrightness and purity with which the approach was developed and applied. . . .It is thanks to the consistency and purity with which the audiolingual method has been steadfastly applied that it has been possible to test out its ultimate inefficacy and which made it possible now to move on to something potentially better" (*id.*, pp. 26-27).

The claim about the perfect implementation by the profession of the audiolingual approach is made in spite of the fact that the author himself quotes the following paragraph by Alfred S. Hayes (Jakobovits, 1970a, p. 43):

> Language teaching in the United States is in a state of transition. Audiolingual teaching in high schools, variously understood and administered by teachers, is widespread, but commonest in the large urban centers. Thinly disguised traditional teaching clings in many conservative colleges and universities, where the language laboratory tends to provide misleading superficial evidence of change. So radical is the nature of the change in progress that this situation must be regarded as expected and unavoidable. The pot, however, is boiling. But a more general understanding of language as signalling behavior is a necessary precursor to further progress in cross-cultural communication.

One might argue that Professor Jakobovits does not contradict himself, since Hayes's paragraph was published in 1964. Presumably, the state of affairs so accurately described by Hayes had changed radically by 1968 (when Jakobovits' article was originally published, see *id.*, 1968, p. 194), thus allowing the claim of consistency, purity and perfection in implementation. Since it is quite obvious that in education such a radical change cannot take place in the short span of four years (the burden of proof is on anyone who dares claim that it can), one might conclude that Hayes's description did not accurately reflect the situation at the time. Four years later, precisely in 1968 and quite independently from Hayes, I had the following to say on the subject:

> In the current criticism of audiolingual teaching, there appears one more manifestation of abstraction which I would like to discuss. This is the tendency to sound as if foreign language teaching were at present, or has ever been, completely under the aegis of audio-lingualism. . . .I would contend that many language teachers at all levels have shown a remarkable and disturbing ability to ignore and misinterpret any and all procedures and recommendations which

> have emanated from linguists and language teaching specialists. I make this assertion on the evidence I have gathered over a period of ten years, and on the evidence gathered by perceptive and reliable observers of foreign language teaching in visits to classrooms in elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities throughout the United States. Most teachers spend their time teaching, not making public statements about foreign language instruction, and it is by observing them in their natural habitat that we apprehend the naked and disturbing realities of our profession. Acceptable audiolingual teaching does not take place in most classrooms. The use (rather misuse) by the teacher or college instructor of an audiolingual textbook constitutes no guarantee of teaching that in any real sense can be called audiolingual, or that can even be considered *teaching*, since it produces no learning worthy of the name (del Olmo, 1968, p. 23).

My personal and professional experience as teacher of foreign languages and trainer of teachers leads me to agree with Hayes's passage and to disagree most vehemently with Jakobovits's interpretation of the situation. There the matter may have to rest: Foreign language specialists and psycholinguists are, perhaps, bound to perceive the same "audiolingual reality" quite differently when they visit foreign language classrooms. I would further contend, however, that Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* offers abundant evidence to confirm my diagnosis rather than Professor Jakobovits's. As confirmation of my argument, the impact of the book as a whole is even more powerful than the specific aspects I have already discussed. At this point, I can do no more than urge reading the book in its entirety. Unfortunately, Hayes, Jakobovits and I agree in one respect: Whatever the reason, there is plenty wrong with the teaching of foreign languages in American schools and colleges.

To attempt to do justice in a critique to everything Professor Jakobovits has so far written on foreign language teaching and learning would require a whole book. As author of such a critique, I would agree with the many valuable contributions he has made as often as I would disagree with the way he interprets the available evidence, whether of a theoretical or practical nature. It is my opinion that his extrapolations from his psycholinguistic expertise to the field of foreign language instruction are rather misleading, particularly for the average foreign language specialist who has not become reasonably familiar with the specialized literature the author constantly refers to, a formidable task that the typical classroom practitioner cannot be expected to accomplish on his own. Unfortunately, the preceding discussion is quite typical of the way I react to every other topic Professor Jakobovits has treated in his numerous articles. I do not question the validity of the psycholinguistic

research he quotes from, but as a language teacher I am most often forced to reject, modify or qualify the implications for the foreign language field that he draws from it. Perhaps if Professor Jakobovits were willing to examine critically all sides of the issues he presents—to put it plainly, if he were more cautious and less biased—he would discover that foreign language specialists can be quite reasonable, objective and open-minded. The expertise that he has to contribute is very much needed in the foreign language field; it is regrettable that his writings prove so polemical.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the audiolingual approach, and the polemics are not being created by "devotees who have committed a life time of work to the method" and who allow themselves "to be drawn into a power struggle of clashing personalities and personal threat to established power structures" (Jakobovits, 1970a, p. 26). Rather, the polemical debate is created by the conviction of foreign language specialists that the available evidence is not being accounted for and examined in an informed and thorough spirit of fairness, and that it is not being presented with the objectivity and completeness required to do justice to the complexity of the subject, and to substantiate the exaggerated claims being made. The magnitude of these claims is such, that they demand nothing less than all-out effort "to present all sides of the issue" and to do justice to the experience of the foreign language profession as a whole, in its positive as well as in its negative aspects. It seems to me that Mr. Jakobovits lacks true insight into some of the negative aspects of the foreign language profession, and that this is one reason why he fails to understand the real nature of the crisis in foreign language education.[17]

The essential point at issue is not who is right and who is wrong

[17] The controversial nature of this author's writings are further documented in the two reviews I have so far seen of his 1970 book *Foreign Language Learning: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of the Issues* (a compilation of articles previously published). These two reviews are by David L. Wolfe and Douglas C. Sheppard (see bibliography). These reviewers take issue with the author on specific points that I have not discussed above. Another reaction to Jakobovits's views are to be found in the contribution of Filomena P. del Olmo to the 1970 Northeast Conference Report, "Motivation in Foreign Language Learning" Reports, 1970 NEC, pp. 75-78). Professor Jakobovits was Vice-Chairman of Working Committee II, Co-Editor of the Report, and author of the section on "Motivation and Learning Factors" (*op. cit.*, pp. 62-75). The format of the report called for commentaries by foreign language specialists. Other commentaries by Elaine C. Libit, Father Daniel R. Kent and Robert J. Nelson (Chairman and Co-Editor) are to be found on pp. 78-85.

in diagnosing the nature of the ills that afflict the teaching of foreign languages in American schools and institutions of higher learning. The real issue is that unless we succeed in analyzing accurately the "state of the art" and the state of the foreign language profession, we will not be able to take the corrective action that circumstances and conditions demand. It is my conviction that Professor Jakobovits's biased and faulty overall presentation of the fundamental issues can only lead the profession to waste more time and effort in dealing with symptoms rather than with the real causes that lie at the root of our ineffective and inefficient teaching. This is not to deny, though, that Professor Jakobovits has not correctly called attention to issues and specific details that deserve our consideration. The problem is that he is unwittingly contributing to the perpetuation of those very same conditions that were prevalent before the late 1950's–conditions that have made it impossible for the audiolingual approach to fulfill, in most instances, its potential for quality, and which are also to blame for the approach actually not being as well established within the profession as some people think it is. Such conditions, if left undiagnosed and unchanged, would also defeat Mr. Jakobovits's proposals for improvement, or anybody else's. By mistakenly blaming "the audiolingual method" for the present state of affairs, and by ignoring the history of the reform movement within our profession, Professor Jakobovits is actually working against his own goals, and missing the mark by a wide margin. My central concern in this paper is to advance the cause of reform by trying to do justice to the complex nature of reality. We simply cannot afford to ignore history or to give short shrift to first-hand professional experience.

I have already said that I do not foresee any viable, entirely new departures in foreign language methodology, but rather refinements, increased sophistication, changes in emphasis, and, hopefully, improvements in the quality of instruction and learning. The problems of foreign language teaching have been around for too long (some of the most urgent ones have little to do with methodology, anyway), and most everything concerning methodology has been said at one time or another. But the search, or simple longing, for new El Dorados and fountains of youth persists. Louis G. Kelly gives us fair warning in a book on the history of language teaching published in 1969:

> Language teaching has shared neither the honesty nor the self-knowledge of the fine arts. Whereas artists are willing to seek inspiration from the past, teachers, being cursed with the assumption that their discoveries are necessarily an improvement on what went on before, are reluctant to learn from history. Thus it is that they unwittingly

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rediscover old techniques by widely differing methods of research (p. 396).[18]

If we disregard our own history, why should we expect psycholinguists to be familiar with it? And thus the dialogue of the deaf is likely to continue.

These days, one hears a great deal about learning and teaching through the "situational reinforcement approach." A comparative study has been carried out between a purely structural approach and a situational approach—again the theoretician's or experimenter's penchant and need for black and white distinctions that are quite pointless in the pragmatic business of language teaching—in teaching foreign languages to elementary school children. Language drills are supposed to be good only if they are situationally reinforced. But in all this talk about situational approaches, one never hears the names of Malinowski and Firth who in the 1920's developed the notion of "context of situation." The notion and its relevance to language teaching seems to have been rediscovered by some people, in spite of all that has been said and done about it over the last forty-five years. British teachers and applied linguists have been particularly devoted to the notions of situational context and situational meaning. In 1950, A.S. Hornby published an article entitled "The Situational Approach in Language Teaching" (Allen, 1965, pp. 195-200). Finally, nobody seems aware of the fact that the MLA Guides for Teaching Spanish in Grades 3 Through 6, written and published between 1955 and the early 60's, were very much situationally oriented. (It would be easy to mention many more materials with this characteristic.) It would certainly be helpful and enlightening, in more than one way, to relate all so-called new developments to old ideas, methods and techniques.

The present emphasis on cognitivism may produce the "audio-lingual-cognitive approach" that Carroll (1971) envisages, although he finds the term somewhat paradoxical. Actually, it is not paradoxical at all, if we do not insist on the shot-gun marriage of

[18] Silberman (pp. 179-80) shows that, among educators, foreign language teachers are not the only ones to ignore the experiences of the past, rather than profit from them. He also quotes Dewey concerning the unfortunate "tendency of educational development to proceed by reaction from one thing to another, to adopt for one year, or for a term of seven years, this or that new study or method of teaching, and then as abruptly to swing over to some new educational gospel;" such a tendency "would be impossible if teachers were adequately moved by their own independent intelligence" *(op. cit.,* p. 489). This was written in 1904.

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audiolingualism and behaviorism. The synthesis is not even new. At least it goes back to teaching materials developed during the 1950's. *Modern Spanish* is a clear-cut example of an audiolingual-cognitive textbook, in spite of the fact that experimenters such as Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968, *passim*) have managed to miss completely its well-developed cognitive component. The cognitive approach must be extended beyond grammar into semantics, culture, the nature of language and the psychology of language learning, but nobody, as far as I know, has really attempted to incorporate this kind of cognitive component into a textbook designed, at the same time, to teach all four skills.

Finally, I want to point out that linguists are now devoting themselves in earnest to the study of meaning. New developements in semantics and in generative semantics are already providing us with the tools needed to devise better grammatical explanations and better teaching materials. Hopefully, teachers will eventually become familiar with concepts such as that of aspect, and will get used to treatments dealing with the syntax of tense and the semantics of time. Case Grammar is also providing very sophisticated and refined classifications of verbs, as well as other important insights into the deep structures of languages.

A few years ago (del Olmo, 1968, pp. 25-26), I attempted to show that *even under normal conditions* there are very many factors that can decisively affect the process of foreign language learning, distort it, or render it meaningless and ineffective. On this occasion, I have attempted to show that at present there are other factors at work–a reflection of the social, educational and professional crises we are experiencing–that further affect, distort and impair the complex and challenging undertaking the foreign language learner must face. To ascribe the foreign language crisis to any one major factor rather than to a combination of them–some inherent in language learning and teaching, some of a professional nature, and some quite adventitious–reveals an impressive naivete, or a willingness to ignore the nature of reality in order to plead a foregone conclusion. I have tried to draw a clear line between social and educational history, professional developments, and the theory and practice of foreign language instruction–my contention being that the reigning confusion in professional literature can only be compounded if we do not make an effort to analyze the pertinent issues in a historical perspective and in the appropriate context.

Robert L. Politzer (1971, p. 196) has listed various causes for the crisis in foreign language education: "Perhaps the major one is

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simply the political climate which has turned the country's concern away from" foreign languages; the shortcomings of the foreign language curricula themselves, "and their being based on questionable theoretical assumptions;" "the failure to take cognizance of the motivation of the 'new student'". He, then, summarizes the period here under review in the following terms:

> One important fact underlying the development of the past ten years appears to emerge. . . .: The NDEA effort, the New Key etc. were undertaken in the name of practicality of foreign language, in the name of foreign language being a necessity in the shrinking world. It seems that these claims were often used to instill new life into an already existing pattern of foreign language education: namely foreign language taught as a prerequisite to literature study and justified primarily on the basis of the "Educated Man" ideal. Symptomatic of the failure to really follow through on the implications of the avowed new ideals and purposes, was, I believe, the retention of existing curriculum patterns, the fact that language courses were largely thought of as preparatory to literature courses, the virtual failure to expand enrollment in certain vital languages. . . .To some extent, at least, the present complete rejection of the "Educated Man" ideal[19] affects Foreign Language Education in such a drastic way simply because instruction and curriculum were in fact largely geared to that concept rather than to some of the avowed aims like practicality and international communication (*loc. cit.*).

[19] Cf. the 1970 presidential address to the Modern Language Association by Maynard Mack (*PMLA* , 86, 3 [May 1971], pp. 363-74). The address as a whole is very apposite to my subject matter. Without further comment or discussion, I shall limit myself to two quotations.

> "I am not referring when I say this to the matters that may be foremost in our minds at this instant–such matters as the flight of students in several prominent universities from literature to the social sciences, which may or may not be an omen for us all, or the continuing shrinkage of federal, state, and private funds, with everything that this implies in the way of fewer jobs, fewer fellowships, and fewer opportunities for educational innovation, just when such innovation is most required. Nor do I refer, primarily, to the looming threat–and already sometimes the serious fact–of interference from outside the university, or to the current student mood, which, though quiet at the moment, is not, I think, serene, and simmers on in a highly unstable mix of battle fatigue, self-exploration, and what my president at Yale has lately called 'monumental scorn' for things as they are" (p. 363).
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> "Our central myths of concern, including our sense of who we are and what we thought was our mission in the world, are caving in. We mean well, at least we believe we mean well, yet we do evil. We possess unprecedented wealth, yet our own poor are always with us, to say nothing of the poor of the world. We aspire to the American Dream, but what we have got is the American Way, a society where the things that are not for sale grow fewer every year. Are not these the disquieting facts that all thoughtful Americans are brooding on today, and the young perhaps more keenly than any?" (P. 367.)

This seems to me an apt summation of some of the points I have been trying to make. It complements and brings up to date the descriptive and diagnostic content of the passages written by Hayes and by me in 1964 and 1968 (*supra,* pp. 35-36).

In concluding this review of the theory, practice and circumstances of foreign language instruction, I do not want to leave the impression that it all amounts to "much ado about nothing." The confusion is great, but in spite of all the energy and time wasted, I think that we are making progress in the theory of foreign language instruction. The most pertinent question, however, is whether our classroom practices are ever going to catch up with our fancy cogitations on methodology. We still have a long way to go in doing justice to our approaches and objectives so as to improve the quality of our teaching, thus coping with the demands and needs of our students. The need for change is more urgent than ever, and, as a profession, we may be running out of time to carry out the reforms and improvements that the times demand.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT THEORETICAL ISSUES ON OBJECTIVES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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The foreign language teaching profession has generally failed to state its instructional objectives clearly (del Olmo, 1968). The absence of carefully defined objectives has made the comparison of teaching approaches, methods, and techniques difficult and has contributed in a large proportion to the current malaise in our field. In addition, foreign language teachers have often adopted the instructional objective implicit in the theoretical movements that have periodically swept its two principal supportive disciplines, linguistics and psychology. If language teaching is to become fully professional, it must begin to assume an independent stance toward all supportive disciplines and technologies; it must assume full responsibility for the statement of its objectives; and it must carefully evaluate new trends in the light of their contribution to the achievement of these objectives.

Much of the current malaise in the field of FL instruction results from the weakening of the theoretical bases of audiolingual oriented instruction. It will be recalled that at the 1966 Northeast Conference meeting Noam Chomsky declared that neither structural linguistics nor behavioral psychology had achieved any insights into the process of language acquisition that would provide a principled basis for any methodological claims (Chomsky, 1967). While hedging his proposal with the warning that "there is no more reason to believe that the basic principles of grammar are learned than there is for making a comparable assumption about...visual perception," Chomsky suggested that (generative)–transformational grammar and the innate or rationalist theory of language acquisition held some promise in helping us achieve a better understanding of the language learning process. In this paper, I should like to discuss recent statements about the applicability of these two theories to problems of language instruction against the backdrop of the formulation of instructional objectives.

The Understanding of deep-seated grammatical generalizations

Tranformational grammar differs from structural linguistics in relating surface grammatical relationships observable in the speech signal to a set of abstract formatives–deep structures.

Such surface sentences as

(1) The shooting of the hunters was terrible.

are ambiguous and correspond to two sets of conceptual relations. In one of the interpretations

(1a) Someone shot the hunters. That was terrible.

the hunters need a funeral, and in the other

(1b) The hunters shot in a terrible manner.

they need more target practice. But the same conceptual structure can be rendered by sentences which differ considerably at the surface level. Sentences

(2) The dragon devoured the unicorn

and

(3) The unicorn was devoured by the dragon.

are synonymous and both have an underlying conceptual structure that may be represented as

(4) (Past) (devour) (unicorn: Object)
(dragon: Agent)

Since the function of language is to transmit concepts from the brain of one speaker to that of another, an adequate syntactic analysis must relate surface relationships to deep-seated, abstract relationships which can then be matched with conceptual structures.

Early applications of transformational grammar concentrated on the formal nature of the relationship between deep and surface structure. Since the nature of both deep and surface structure and their relationship to conceptual structure have undergone major revisions since Chomsky launched his theory more than twelve years ago, these early applications consisted, by and large, in the restatement of well-known facts by means of an esoteric but vacuous formalism. These applications of transformational grammar which swept the land under the label of "New English"–and which fortunately the field of foreign language instruction has been spared–have come under severe criticism from neo-transformationalists. For example, in an article entitled "Transformational Grammar and Language Teaching," Robin Lakoff (1969) characterizes the most popular applications of transformational grammar to the teaching of English grammar as follows:

> ...they are not employing rationalism at all, but resorting to new forms of the same mumbo-jumbo; they have substituted one kind of rote learning for another, and the new kind is harder than the

> old...Instead of filling in patterns of sentences–surface structure–students now have to learn patterns of abstractions–the rules themselves. And these rules are, without exception, fakes.

To properly apply transformational grammar to problems of language teaching it is not necessary to develop a complex apparatus; one must simply capture the general principles that relate conceptual structures to surface manifestations. Excellent examples of the formulation of these deep-seated general principles of syntactic organization are given by Lakoff and in a paper entitled "Indirect Objects in Spanish and English," presented by Mark Goldin (1971), at the Symposium on Generative Grammar and Romance Languages held recently at the University of Florida (Gainesville).

Goldin points out that in Spanish and English surface indirect objects represent diverse conceptual relationships and that in the two languages they are subject to different surface constraints. For example in Spanish

(5) Ricardo le compro´ un regalo a Juana
"Dick bought Jane a gift"

(6) Ricardo le robó un conejo a Juana
"Dick stole a rabbit from Jane"

(7) Ricardo le gusta a Juana
"Dick appeals to Jane" "Jane likes Dick"

(8) Ricardo le vio la braga a Juana
"Dick saw Jane's underpants"

represent situations statable as

(5a) bought
(gift: Object)
(Jane: Benefactor)
(Dick: Agent)

(6a) stole
(rabbit: Object)
(Jane: Experiencer-Loser)
(Dick: Agent)

(7a) appeal
(Dick: Object)
(Jane: Experiencer)

(8a) saw
(underpants: Object)
(Jane: Inalienable Possessor)
(Dick: Agent)

In order to transmit a message adequately and accurately an English-speaking learner of Spanish must be able to handle two sets of rules. First he must know that the various conceptual notions

Benefactor, Experiencer-Loser, Experiencer, Inalienable Possessor can be expressed in Spanish by indirect objects, and in some instances by indirect objects or prepositional phrases. Thus,

(5) Ricardo le compró un regalo a Juana

has the paraphrase

(5a) Ricardo compró un regalo para Juana
"Dick bought a gift for Jane"

which more nearly matches the surface structure of the English equivalent. But there are instances where Spanish and English differ in the syntactic means used to express the same conceptual notions. In Spanish

(8) Ricardo le vio la braga a Juana
"Dick saw Jane's underpants"

(9) Ricardo vio la braga de Juana
"Dick saw Jane's underpants"

for (8) but not (9) implies that the garment in question was at the particular time worn by Jane. Both Spanish and English distinguish at the conceptual level between alienable and inalienable possession, the latter including generally body parts but also certain objects such as articles of clothing. But the two languages provide different means of syntactic expression for that notion. The English-speaking learner of Spanish must learn that in that language the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession is obligatory and is expressed by the choice between the indirect object and the prepositional phrase constructions. Following Goldin, we might label rules that relate conceptual structure to surface structure *conceptual rules*.

A somewhat different type of conceptual rule is illustrated by the contrast between

(10) John is the doctor in our town

and

(11) John is a doctor in our town

Attached to (10) is the *presupposition* that John is the only doctor in the town whereas no such implication can be inferred from (11). While such conceptual notions as specific versus generic, definite versus indefinite are universals found in a wide variety of languages, the expression of these notions by particular syntactic means is language specific. Semantically related to the contrast (10) versus (11) are the French and Spanish contrasts

(12) Je cherche un homme qui sache parler le volapük.

versus

(13) Je cherche un homme qui sait parler le volapük.

and

(14) Busco a un hombre que fume marihuana.

and

(15) Busco a un hombre que fuma marihuana.

Sentences (13) and (15) imply that the speaker presupposes that a man meeting the desired characteristics exists whereas the use of the subjunctive form of the verb in (12) and (14) indicates that he is not certain that his quest will meet with success.

Contrasting with conceptual rules are *surface rules.* These can be formulated independently of semantic consjderations and involve only surface structure relationships. For example, to express accurately the situations represented by the abstract structure (5a-8a), the English learner needs to have internalized a rule that specifies that in Spanish an indirect object pronoun is obligatory even when the referent is expressed overtly and that an indirect object noun must be preceded by the preposition *a.* In other words,

(5c) *Ricardo compró un regalo a Juana "Dick bought a gift for Jane

and

(5d) *Ricardo le compró a Juana un regalo "Dick bought Jane a gift"

which are suggested by the English near-equivalents, are ungrammatical.

The same syntactic feature sometimes may be determined either by conceptual or surface rules. Most occurrences of the subjunctive in French can be accounted for by automatic rules triggered by the presence of a relatively small list of verbs in main clauses or a small list of conjunctions that link subordinate and main clauses, although it is no doubt the case that in these instances one might postulate the conceptual feature found in such sentences as (12) and (13) where the subjunctive contrasts with the indicative. Thus in some cases the teacher may choose to present a target language feature in terms of a conceptual rule and by means of explicit statement or in terms of a surface rule to be memorized unthinkingly. Most of the grammar rules found in audio-lingual oriented courses–and in at least one widely used set of materials inappropriately labeled *generalizations*–are of the surface type. New Key methodologists who adhere closely to orthodox dogma insist that these rules are merely "summaries of behavior." As such they are not viewed as facilitative and play no role in the internalization of structural rules. But it is also clear that, if the learner is to produce sentences he has never heard before and initiate meaningful messages, he must internalize conceptual rules.

In focusing on conceptual rules transformational linguists are

returning to the concerns of traditional grammarians, and many New Key adherents, taking a defensive stance have dismissed these endeavors as a reactionary turning back of the clock. This is a most unfortunate reaction, for transformational grammarians have brought to bear on traditional problems more rigorous procedures that have enabled them to gain a better understanding of deep-seated general syntactic principles. Furthermore, although they assign a greater value to conceptual rules, since they are more deep-seated, transformational grammarians are not denying that proficiency in any of the four linguistic skills (speaking, understanding, reading and writing) requires control of structural rules, and they see nothing wrong with memorization as a means to achieve this end (Lakoff, 1969). In sum, the issue is not whether foreign language teachers should make use of conceptual or structural rules; both are required if one's objectives are for the learner to produce sentences which are situationally appropriate, semantically acceptable, and grammatically and phonologically accurate.

However, just as structural linguists were led inevitably by their concentration on surface structure to advocate emphasis on functional control of audiolingual skills, so transformational grammarians tend to proselytize for intellectual understanding of the principles that underlie language competence. Starting from the observation that few FLES, high-school or college foreign language programs lead to a high-level of proficiency in listening comprehension or speaking and erroneously attributing this low level of proficiency on the linguistic and psychological bases of the New Key, they suggest that the most accessible and educationally rewarding goal in foreign language instruction is an understanding of the structure of target language and, ultimately of human language and the human mind. It is widely accepted by foreign language teachers that the imparting of insights on the nature of language constitutes a worthwhile goal of foreign language instruction but it is one that would best be served within the context of language arts and English classrooms. Transformational grammarians are engaging more and more in activities applicable to foreign language teaching. But if the foreign language teacher accepts the premise that his primary objective is the production of incipient bilinguals rather than apprentice linguists, he will need to be vigilant not to have the transformational grammarian's bias toward explication and discussion of linguistic structure foisted upon him.

I should like to conclude this section by suggesting an implication from some of the insights of transformational grammar

that should lead audiolingual oriented teachers to reexamine their instructional objectives. The nature of the teaching context in which audiolingual instruction takes place–limited number of contact hours, large classes, etc.– makes it difficult for the average learner to acquire a degree of proficiency which at the same time will meet communicative needs and approximate native accuracy. In other words, the teacher must choose to aim at the control of conceptual rules which will enable the learner to formulate a wide range of meaningful messages while accepting a low level of accuracy or, on the contrary, to aim at the control of structural rules within a limited set of conceptual rules so that the learner will produce a limited set of meaningful messages with a high level of accuracy. Most audiolingual programs have opted for the latter alternative, and in my opinion, have erred seriously in doing so.

In the following discussion of the implications of the adoption of the rationalist view of language learning I will present some arguments for choosing as objective the acquisition on the part of the learner of the ability to produce a large set of meaningful messages with less than perfect accent and partial control of surface grammar features.

The Rationalist View of Language Acquisition and Compensatory Instruction

According to the Chomskian view of first language acquisition to which the label "rationalist" or "innate" has been attached, all human beings are endowed at birth with a set of mechanisms that enable them to construct language-specific rules of wide generality from the random language data to which they are exposed. Language is acquired by children according to a scheme so tied to maturational factors and so uniform across different linguistic groups that imitation of parental speech cannot be considered the most important factor in their linguistic development. Furthermore, utterances produced by young children differ so markedly from adult speech that they can hardly be accounted for by such processes as imitation and reinforcement. Most audiolingual oriented methodologists who are willing to grant that innate mechanisms determine first language acquisition reject the possibility that these mechanisms might still operate beyond adolescence and are applicable to second language learning. They hold that the only psychological factor that shapes second-language learning is interference between first-language habits and those of the target language. Thus, they define the linguistic features to be learned as the sum of the differences between the two languages in contact.

They place great value on the point-by-point comparisons of the native and the target languages, and they use the results of this contrastive analysis to guide the selection and ordering of linguistic features to be learned and the design of materials. But careful observation of foreign language learner errors suggests that negative transfer accounts for only part of them. In fact many learner errors are due to analogy and overgeneralization and a type of simplification of surface rules whereby many features that do not contribute to the transmission of conceptual information are deleted. For instance learners of French and Spanish might reduce to a single form adjectives that show contrastive feminine and masculine forms:

(16) L'autre maison est très grande — *L'autre maison est très grand
L'autre château est très grand.

(17) No me gusta la casa blanca. — *No me gusta la casa blanco.
No me gusta el coche blanco.

These processes also operate in the developement of pidgins, languages used for transient contacts only by speakers of languages that are not mutually intelligible and who use their native languages for most of their communicative needs within their own linguistic communities.

It seems then that innate mechanisms of language acquisition are available to older foreign language learners and that under natural conditions of language use they determine how these learners acquire a command of the foreign language sufficient for their communicative needs. From this point of view, errors that learners make reveal the learning strategies they employ and should more properly be viewed as a form of re-analysis and restructuring of the language data to which they are exposed. I should like to illustrate this process of restructuring with data from the use of French interrogative constructions by a college-level learner. I will then suggest some implications from the innate view of language acquisition to the formulation of objectives and the design of audiolingual oriented programs.

French interrogative constructions are troublesome to English learners not because the conceptual and surfacerules which underly them differ markedly from those of English but because in spoken French there are numerous synonymous interrogative constructions. For example, *Where are you going?* may be expressed

(18) Où vas-tu
(19) Où est-ce que tu vas?
(20) Tu vas où?
(21) Où ta vas?

The order given reflects decreasing level of formality. While most

materials contain only the constructions underlying (18) and (19), any learner exposed to spontaneous spoken French will hear all four types. If learners are endowed with mechanisms that guide them in simplifying raw language data and in reorganizing them into more easily acquired systems we should not be surprised to find such restructured systems as the one elicited from a student in an intermediate college French course who had studied the language for two years in high school and had spent a summer in France:

Inversion

(22) Où vas-tu?	Where are you going?
(23) Où travaillez-vous?	Where are you working?
(24) Où travaille Jean?	Where does John work?

Est-ceque

(25) Qu'est-ce que vous mangez?	What are you eating?
(26) Qu'est-ce que vous vois [vwa]?	Whaf do you see?
(27) Qu'est-ce que vous aimez?	What do you like?

Fronting of Interrogative Pronoun

(28) Quand vous *partir?	When are you leaving? (Compare English non-standard and child language "When you are leaving?")
(29) Quand vous *a parti?	When did you leave?
(30) Pourquoi vous dites ca?	Why do you say that?
(31) A quelle heure vous mangez?	What time do you eat?
(32) Qui vous attendez?	Whom are you waiting for?

The learner has resolved the problem of multiple synonymous constructions very neatly: (1) she uses inversion only with the locative *où*; (2) she uses the *est-ce que* construction only in the combination *qu'est-ce que* interpreted as the equivalent of English "what;" (3) for all other cases she uses a form considered relatively non-standard by French speakers but which she seems to handle with the greatest ease and which has the most extensive domain in her restructured system. It is interesting to note that the learner's control of verb forms deteriorates within the context of the third type of interrogative structure. One might hypothesize that the learner has acquired this interrogative type by exposure to informal style speech in which the informal second person is used more frequently than the formal.

The adoption of the innate view of language acquisition and the recognition that the speaker's use of his language is determined by

complex abstract principles that are not always manifest in observable utterances lead necessarily to the rejection of what Leon A. Jakobovits (1970) terms the strong version of teaching: namely, that foreign language learning is contingent on specific environmental conditions arranged by the teacher. Instead, starting from the assumption that "the capacity of the brain to learn—to extract knowledge from the environment and organize it—by far outstrips our capacity to teach," Jakobovits advocates the adoption of a weaker view of teaching which he labels *compensatory instruction.* Compensatory instruction involves focusing attention on such characteristics of learners as aptitude, attitude, and motivation, to the process of second language acquisition, and to the sociolinguistic context in which language learning takes place. To associate compensatory instruction with short-range and situationally oriented foreign language instruction objectives such as "business letter writing," "radio broadcast listening," etc. is to go far beyond what is implied by the linguistic and psychological theories on which compensatory instruction rests, and a discussion of the ill-found nature of such objectives does not deserve discussion here. The adoption of the notion of compensatory instruction does, however, suggest profound modifications in three important areas: (1) the selection and ordering of course content; (2) the specification of intermediate objectives; (3) the organization of the context in which foreign language instruction takes place.

Selection and ordering of course content and the specification of performance of objectives

To recognize that foreign language learners of all ages are guided by innate principles of language acquisition and that errors are usually manifestations of the operation of these principles is not to suggest the abandonment of some form of teacher control of the instructional process. This view of foreign language learning is not incompatible with such New Key techniques as the memorization of dialogues or pattern drills. It does imply, however, that the selection and ordering of the content of foreign language programs cannot be determined a priori by contrastive analysis or an internal analysis of the target language. Learning steps will need to be determined in large part by the learner's interaction with the target language data. This of course is no novel proposal, for it was put forward more than a decade ago by the advocates of programmed instruction. But those who applied programmed instruction techniques to foreign language learning fell into the same trap as did New Key adherents: they failed to distinguish between linguistic competence and linguistic perfor-

mance, and they assumed that the control of a certain number of surface phonological and grammatical features led directly and necessarily to proficiency in the functional use of language. Drill on individual phonological and syntactic features of the target language and the memorization of vocabulary are preparatory activities and we still do not know very well how they are related to the ability to produce semantically appropriate and grammatically well-formed sentences in a real communicative situation. Transformational grammarians have demonstrated that the knowledge a speaker has of his language can be only partially inferred from the sentences he produces overtly, and pattern drills are designed only to teach surface rules but are inappropriate to impart knowledge and control of conceptual rules.

These facts should give thought to those foreign language teachers who are rushing to get on the fast moving performance objectives and criteria bandwagon. Performance objectives involve statements about changes in learner behavior. In setting up criterion performance for the establishment of behavioral objectives one is led to measure and quantify changes in overt linguistic behavior. Since linguistic performance is only indirectly related to linguistic competence, and since it is primarily linguistic competence that the foreign language teacher seeks to develop, measuring performance on behavioral objectives gives an inaccurate picture of the learner's real progress. There is renewed interest currently in the development of listening comprehension and in the imparting of knowledge of the deep-seated semantic and syntactic principles of the target language (cognitive-code learning.) But these are precisely skills and knowledge whose development can only be measured inferentially. It is laudable for the FL teaching profession to seek to establish objective criteria on the basis of which learner progress can be accurately charted and on the basis of which the efficiency of its practices can be strictly evaluated. It should be borne in mind, though, that given the complex nature of language and the still primitive state of the knowledge we have of how it is acquired, great care must be exercised in selecting yard-sticks against which genuine progress in the acquisition of a second language can be measured.

The Individualization of the Learning Process

The observation and classification of errors reveal that learners differ considerably in the types of learning strategies they use. Some learners require extensive practice in preparatory activities such as repetition and pattern drills while others have a low level of tolerence for them. Other learners are more apt at internalizing structural rules

but are less gifted in discovering deep-seated conceptual principles. To be efficient, a FL program must allow individual students not only to proceed through the material at their own pace but also to master it by making use of those learning strategies that they find most facilitative.

Economically viable FL programs, totally responsibe to individual learner differences, are still far beyond present technological capabilities. But there are many things that can be done today if we are willing to abandon the present syllabus and teacher-centered teaching context. First, we must abandon the notion that all students can acquire the same degree of functional mastery of specified language skills with the same amount of exposure. This does not mean that within the same period of instruction some students will have completed the full syllabus while others will have mastered only part of it. Rather, we should bear in mind that, say, within the context of an audiolingually oriented course, only the most gifted and motivated students can achieve functional control of a specified amount of phonology, syntax, and vocabulary with near-native accuracy of performance. For most students, we should be content to accept cognitive competence and moderate functional control with tolerable performance. We must also be more realistic about the amount of exposure that is required to gain functional mastery of audiolingual skills with near-native performance, and we must formulate our objectives in terms of levels of intermediate competence and performance that lead to terminal objectives without the risk of inducing *fossilization*, the internalization of linguistic features that cannot be later shaped into desired terminal performance. These changes in our attitudes toward the learner and the learning process imply a clear distinction between those activities conducted by the teacher and those which are better assumed by other agents. The latter include all preparatory activities involving memorization and drill and can be undertaken by students using self-instructional devices or supervised by para-professionals. Thus freed to concentrate on those phases of FL instruction which require human contact, teachers can concentrate on making FL instruction a pleasurable experience from which all learners who have persevered for a short period of time may gain something of lasting value.

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CAN WE AFFORD TO BE RELEVANT?

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Let me begin by saying that I am not here today as an expert in what you are doing. I have never taught a language to anyone under eighteen, and most of my students have been over twenty-one. Furthermore, my recent experience has been with seldom-taught languages like Armenian and Swahili, which are taught under conditions and for reasons which are vastly different from what most of you are accustomed to. What I hope is that a few of the ideas that have developed out of my kind of work will be of some interest in yours.

I am not here, then, because I am an expert, and only partly because I am a linguist. My own principal reason for wanting to talk with you today is that I am a parent. Two of my children have gone through five years apiece of foreign language study in what I believe to be one of the best school systems in the country, and I am gravely concerned lest my third—and thousands like him in all parts of the country—have an experience like theirs. My first two, though their grades were very high, almost dropped their languages after four years; they did drop them after five, and I must say that I can't blame them. The principal shortcoming in their high school instruction, I am convinced, was lack of relevance. That is what I'd like to talk with you about this afternoon.

Here in my hand, I have an ordinary two-pronged electrical plug. If life were an electrical system, this plug would be a language, and the process of assembling this plug would be the subject matter for a language course.

This plug, as you see it here, is related to nothing: *and* it is totally 'irrelevant.' But suppose now that I have a socket into which I can fit the plug. Now the plug is no longer related to nothing. It is closely and appropriately *related* to the socket. But it is still just as *irrelevant* as it was before. Suppose I go on and relate the socket to a wiring system, and the wiring system to a fuse box, a power line, and ultimately to a generator. The plug is still irrelevant, even at the end of this long chain of relatednesses. We still need a wire from the plug to a switch, and something for the switch to turn on, and finally we have to have somebody to eat the toast, or read by the light, or listen to the radio. Then, and only then does this plug become, in any

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useful sense, 'relevant.' If the chain is broken anywhere, the plug immediately reverts to irrelevance.

In this sense, 'relevance' is an all-or-none proposition. In the context of language teaching, if what goes on in class does not make sense in terms of at least one of the student's interests, and that interest make sense in terms of a pattern of wider and longer-term interests—in other words, to what is for him reality— then relevance breaks down after the plug. Just a picture of Buenos Aires or Berlin, or just talking about the day's events, or race relations, or the war, or ecology, or just playing dominoes with each other in French does not guarantee relevance. Any of these may be helpful, but none is sufficient, and none is necessary. And if on the other hand there is a lack of an authentic model to follow, or lack of coherent materials, then the power is not getting even as far as the socket.

Much of what has been said and written about language teaching, particularly in recent years, has concentrated either on getting the power to the socket, or on devising faster, more efficient, cleverer ways of assembling the plug. We're pretty good at that. Sometimes I think we're much better at that than we need to be. But we are much less adept at tying into the total need-and-interest structures of our students.

Can the hard-pressed classroom teacher, who meets over a hundred different students every day, hope to have time and energy enough to fire up a toaster for one, drive a radio for another, and light up a reading lamp for yet another? Can we be expected to do more than get the 110 volts up to the socket? Or, in the words of my title today, can we afford to be relevant?

The obvious reply to a question like that is, Relevant to what? In that connection, I'd like to list for you several kinds of relevance which I have observed over the years, but particularly within the past year as I've been travelling around, talking with all kinds of language teachers, and pulling together some of my thoughts for a report to the Office of Education.

A relevant lesson or activity may of course relate to present reality—to the here and now—what is physically present in this classroom, during this hour. Or it may relate to *prospective* reality—something that will or may happen in the future. This is valid as long as we remember that the literal meaning of 'prospective' is 'looking forward,' and that the person whose imagination must look forward to these things in the future is the student, and not just the teacher and the textbook writer. In the same way, a relevant lesson may have its immediate relationship to something in the past—last

week, last year, or a thousand years ago. This we may call *retrospective* reality, and again, when we say 'spective' we are referring to the mind of the student, not only the teacher or the textbook writer.

This is the chronological dimension of relevance, past, present and future. Scattered along this dimension we find the student's experiences, we find his use of language as an instrument to do other things, all of these in their external aspect, in terms of his relationships with the outside world, and with other people. All of these, then, involve what we may call extro-spection. This outward-looking kind of relatedness may in the long run be necessary for relevance, but it is not by itself sufficient for relevance. Because running at right angles to the horizontal chronological dimension is the vertical dimension which goes beneath extrospection to intro-spection—to what the student sees when he looks inside himself. Does he see himself as a success, or as a failure? As apt, or as inept? As a docile internalizer of 'phonetics, basic vocabulary and grammar,' who is striving to meet the teacher's expectations and so receive a passing grade? Or as a contributor of necessary insights and valued expectations? Whose activity does he see as primary, the teacher's or his own? Is he, in his own eyes, a mover or a pawn?

Emphasis on the introspective end of this vertical dimension is, to my way of thinking, the most interesting feature of what Dr. Gattegno calls his 'Silent Way' of teaching languages. Exploitation of the horizontal dimension is reduced to what must surely be its very narrowest minimum. During the first part of the course, all talking is about a set of cuisenaire rods. As you know, these are small wooden blocks which differ from each other only in length and color. They are little more than concrete abstractions. These are followed by a series of pictures which portray other things, but which again are about as unrelated to the horizontal kind of external, interesting reality as it is possible to get and still depict real objects. But it is this very annihilation of the horizontal dimension, coupled with the almost complete silence of the teacher, that allows and indeed forces both student and teacher to focus their attention on the intro-spective—on what resources are available from within his mind, and what he is ready to do at any given moment. Having seen this kind of thing in action, I am no longer willing to deny that, in the short run, and with a teacher who can focus his attention on the inside of the student's mind, the vertical dimension may be sufficient. In the long run, of course, it is not. In fact, the essence of relevance is that it connects something on the horizontal dimension of external ex-

perience with something on the vertical dimension of the student's appreciation of himself. It is the vertical dimension, however, that language teachers talk and write about the least.

So we have discovered that the essence of relevance lies in forming a bond between the exterior and the interior. Very pretty. We still come back to our original question: Can we *afford* to be relevant? And a second obvious retort to this question is, Can we afford *not* to be relevant? Put that way, it is almost like asking whether we are against motherhood, or goodness. How can anybody, these days, say publicly that he believes we can afford *not* to be relevant? But be that as it may, I'm afraid that even the stoutest certainty that we can*not* afford to be *ir*relevant does not guarantee that we *can* afford to be *relevant*.

So let's try again. Maybe the question, instead of Can we afford to be relevant? should be How relevant can we afford to be? This sounds like asking How much individual attention can we give students? To what extent can we dispense with a printed textbook? To what extent do we dare put ourselves into the position of often responding to the initiative of the students, as contrasted with only evaluating their responses to ours? These are fundamental questions, all right, and they do have to do with relevance, but to the hard-working and overworked classroom teacher, they may also be alarming questions. So let's select a question that is a little less formidable. Instead of inquiring about the limits, as in the question How relevant can we afford to be? let's start from where we are and look in the direction we want to go. The question then becomes *How can we afford to be more relevant?* That is the question that I am going to explore with you today.

Before trying to answer it, though, let me state one hunch that is on its way to becoming a conviction: that a small-scale relevance—relevance now and then, whenever we can make time for it—is going to turn out to be prohibitively expensive. Maybe it's true that we cannot afford to be irrelevant, but we can't afford relevance, either, if we have to pay for it at retail prices. We can afford it, though, if we can get it wholesale, on a regular, habitual, pervasive basis. This for me has required a drastic change in outlook—in some ways a reversal of much of my thinking of ten years ago. What I am suggesting to you today is that such a change is possible, and I would like to tell you what I think it involves.

We have often said that 'language is behavior,' and so it is. Some of us have gone on from that statement, though, and concluded that what we must therefore do is first of all to describe that behavior and

its internal structure, and cause students to produce that behavior, and further that the way to get them to produce that behavior as a whole is to start by having them reproduce small samples of its external manifestations: this is where we get close mimicry, dialog memorization and the like. Others have quarrelled with the emphasis on pronunciation and surface structure, but even they have left unchallenged the assumption that description of the language, and particularly of its *deep* structure, is a matter of top priority.

But let's go back to our original three-word premise and draw a different set of conclusions from it. 'Language is behavior.' Well and good. But it is behavior that normally accompanies other behavior, and all these kinds of behavior are related to one another like strands in a cable: none will carry much weight by itself. It seems to me that in our everyday, week-in-and-week-out ordinarily irrelevant language teaching –mine at least, and the kind that has been inflicted on my kids in high school–we have placed almost all the weight on the linguistic strand. No wonder it so often sags or even snaps in two!

Language is only one strand in the cable of total behavior, and furthermore, that cable is usually attached at both ends: behavior is normally purposeful. This leads to two conclusions: (1) that the teacher should know *what* is being done, by teacher and students, in the greatest possible detail, and (2) that the teacher should also know *why* it is being done, and should see the 'why' on the widest possible scale.

Going on to look at the lesson itself, as it stands in the book, I would like to suggest a simple but useful way of analyzing its *content,* and a simple but useful way of analyzing its *form.* Content may be inventoried from a linguistic point of view: what words and what structures does the lesson contain? A second point of view is social: who might use this kind of language in talking with whom? A third point of view is topical: what is being talked about? Having made an inventory from each of these three points of view, the teacher is in a better position to hold the structures constant and supplement the vocabulary, or to hold the language relatively constant but change the social setting, or to make other conscious changes that are demanded if we're to have controlled adaptation.

Even more important, to me, is analysis of the form of the lesson. I have just about concluded that a complete, well-balanced, nourishing lesson must have four components and needs only those four. Let's skip the first for a moment. The second component is the one that is the most conspicuous in many language courses today. It is what I call the sample of language in use: a basic dialog, or a

reading selection or something like that. The third component consists of one or more ways of exploring the structure of the language, usually departing from something in the sample of language use. These are drills, exercises, grammar notes, and so forth. And the fourth component consists of one or more ways of exploring the lexicon–again usually starting out from the sample of language use. The first component–the one that I think should be first in the mind of the textbook writer and the teacher, and at the same time the *res ultima,* the destination which the student reaches at least once in every lesson–this component is the one that receives the least attention from most writers whose books I have seen, and from most teachers whose students I have interviewed. This alpha and omega of a good lesson, this source and goal of all the other components, can be stated quite simply in one word: 'payoff.' What will the student be able to do, as a result of the lesson, that will enhance his appreciation of himself, and/or enable him to make a favorable impression on people whose opinion he values, and/or get information that he really wants, and/or do other things that he genuinely wants or likes to do? And it is particularly the interpersonal and intrapersonal kinds of payoff that so seldom get mentioned among us language teachers.

How can we be *more* relevant?? If a high school teacher in a fourth year course spends day after day reading aloud to his students, and another, whose command of the language is somewhat better, sees fit to lecture over a period of weeks about details of the architecture of a series of cathedrals, both are obviously dealing with classes of students who could be engaged in all manner of interesting projects, either individually or in groups. Those are easy examples, but drawn from actual classrooms. The point is that neither of them could have happened if the teacher had looked first at the payoffs that could be expected to result, or not to result, from his performance.

Here's another example of what I mean. Lesson 1 of a well-known beginning text in French, a text that illustrates more than most do the kind of attitude that I think we ought to be encouraging. The author, in the introduction, speaks to the student about ways to 'restore your confidence in yourself and in what you are doing' (vi) and encourages them to use their imagination and their intuition (viii). She enjoins the teacher to 'encourage any initiative, provided that French is the medium used' (19). On the very first day of class, when only half of the first dialog has been presented, the teacher is advised not to worry about finishing it, but

to 'use the rest of this period for reviewing or conversation' [21]. On the fourth day, the teacher's manual observes that ' "free" conversation is a very useful exercise which can be resorted to whenever time permits.' (25) On the 8th day, the teacher is instructed to 'adapt the questions in the book to fit your specific class.... Try to make this as much of a "real" conversation as possible, not just a series of questions and answers on a text they had to prepare.' (30) Later on in Unit 1, which covers 17 class meetings plus lab, the students do two compositions, one on describing the classroom and the other on describing a picture; they do this first orally and then in writing. The purpose of the composition topics is to 'force the students to use the French which they are learning, in relation to their own experience....' (15f) Now, what could possibly be closer than that to what I am recommending?

Let's take another look at this book. The teacher's manual is a wonder of thoroughness, even to the point of suggesting specific gestures and quips for the teacher to use, but the exhortation to make conversation as real as possible is about the only one in the book that is not supported by detailed examples. Even where free conversation is described as 'useful,' it is not the focus toward which all other parts of the lesson converge. No, it is something to be 'resorted to,' and when? 'Whenever time permits.' This lesson has all the right components. Its faults are mainly in focus and emphasis.

But we can go beyond free conversation. Let's look only at the simplest visual aids, such as travel posters or large magazine pictures. Items in each picture can be marked with numbers, as they are in the book itself. The vocabulary can be made available on a single tape or cassette. Individual students may then contract with the teacher to prepare an oral or written description of one or more pictures. Going one step further, students might provide their own pictures of rooms or buildings, marking with a number each new item for which they don't know the name. The teacher, or some other speaker of French can then read the vocabularies onto a tape, which is then made available to the students. This gives an opportunity to use French-speaking paraprofessionals in a controlled way. Going one step further still, the French-speaker might describe each picture in three or four sentences. Students could understand what was already in their textbook, guess at some of the rest, and incorporate it into their own compositions. Meantime, they would have the satisfaction of partially understanding something done impromptu in response to their own pictures, and at the same time they have a good excuse for not worrying about whatever they *can't* understand.

I'm afraid we don't have time for further examples. The thought that I would like to leave with you today in this: that the total meaning of a language course for any one student is the net effect it has had on him. He may conclude that language learning consists in assembling and adjusting an especially complicated plug. Or he may have learned to handle the language somewhat, but believe that he owes it all to a gifted teacher, or a well-written textbook, or even a teaching machine, and fail to appreciate his own part in the process. He may think that the main object of speaking a foreign language is to avoid making mistakes. I would rather have a student come out of a course with a vocabulary of 500 words and a weak grasp of the subjunctive, but with the skills and confidence that will enable him to go on and get more of that language (or some other) when he needs it, than to have him come out with 5000 words and flawless control of the subjunctive, but with the conviction that he cannot–or doesn't even want to–learn more on his own later on. Yet lack of self-confidence in language matters is what we see in too many college graduates who come into the Peace Corps or the Foreign Service. And lack of interest is what my oldest daughter's high school teachers built into her–at exactly the same time they were qualifying her for her membership in the French Honor Society!

Notes:

The textbook from which I quoted was *La Clef*, by Yvette de Petra (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1970).

The key concepts in this paper are taken from my forthcoming report to the Office of Education, to be distributed by the Superintendent of Documents under the title *Adapting and Writing Language Lessons.*

Program

9:00 - 9:20

Registration and Coffee

9:30 - 9:50

Opening of meeting and general announcements

Aaron Polinsky, Ridgewood High School, President of the New Jersey Foreign Language Teachers Association

Welcoming Remarks

Donald L. Herdman, Dean, Peter Sammartino College of Education, Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Presentation of Program and Introductions

Rose Ciricillo, Parsippany-Troy Hills High School. Vice President in charge of Programs.

9:50 - 10:10

"ACTFL and the Changing Scene"

Edward Scebold, Executive Secretary, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

10:15 - 10:45

"The Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Instruction: Overview and Recent Developments"

Guillermo del Olmo, Consultant, Executive Committee of the New Jersey Foreign Language Teachers Association

10:50 - 11:20

"The Implications of Recent Theoretical Issues on Objectives of Foreign Language Instruction"

Albert Valdman, Indiana University

Program

11:20 - 12:00

Panel Reactions

Filomena del Olmo, Fairleigh Dickinson University
James Karambelas, The Pingry School
Frank Kianese, North Plainfield High School
Klaus Muller-Bergh, Yale University
Jay Wissot, Hackensack Public Schools

12:00 - 1:15

LUNCH

1:30 - 2:00

"Language Teaching: Can We Afford to Be Relevant?"

Earl W. Stevick, School of Language and Area Studies, Foreign Service Institute U. S. Department of State

2:00 - 2:50

Workshops

FLES, Filomena del Olmo - Secondary School, James Karambelas; Secondary School, Frank Kianese; TESOL, Jay Wissot; College, Klaus Muller-Bergh.

3:00 - 3:30

Recapitulation of Workshops and Audience Participation

FLES, Janette Royant, Holdrum School, Riverdale
Secondary School, Jacqueline Benevento, Coordinator of Foreign Languages, Collingswood Schools
Secondary School, Walter Eliason, Rider College
TESOL, Janet Susi, Montclair State College, Sr. College, Sr. Janet Richardson, Caldwell College

Dear Colleague:

Our meeting of March 13 will be a special one in more than one sense. As usual, the Program contained in this brochure is the result of hard work on the part of the Association's Vice-President in Charge of Programs, ably assisted by members of the Executive Committee. But certain features of this program would not have been possible without the initiative as well as the professional and financial assistance of the Center for Language Education of Fairleigh Dickinson University (Madison Campus). The New Jersey State Department of Education has also contributed to this common endeavor.

The Program's emphasis on current and relevant issues constitutes more than simple recognition of the stress and change the foreign language profession must now face. Our speakers' professional qualifications and their choice of topics make possible a competent and timely consideration of issues of the utmost importance. Our concern with the latest developments has led us to search for ways to take into account the deliberations taking place, during the weeks immediately preceding our meeting, at the Linguistic Symposium on the Application of Generative Grammar to the Description and Teaching of Romance Languages (University of Florida, Gainesville) and at the TESOL Convention in New Orleans. Teachers and scholars from all over the country will be participating in these important meetings, at which three of our speakers and panelists have been invited to read papers. The importance of the TESOL Convention is such that another one of our main speakers is being sent there with the specific assignment of reporting back on the most significant details of the fifty-odd papers that will be read.

Indeed no effort has been spared in order to make this meeting as relevant as possible, while coping with some of the most recent and significant or controversial developments in our field. From his special vantage point, the Executive Secretary of ACTFL will speak to us on the changing scene in foreign languages. Motivated by their active involvement in the theory and practice of foreign language instruction, two of our main speakers attended recently a seminar for foreign language teachers conducted by the proponent of the "Silent Way," Dr. Caleb Gattegno.

Finally, I would like to specifically bring to your attention the fact that our program has been planned with the intention of ensuring maximum and active audience involvement in the deliberations. This is the reason for our Panel Discussion, for the Workshops and for the General Closing Session. Our speakers are particularly interested in the reactions of teachers to the topics that will be examined in their presentations.

In the name of the Association and our host institution, I am looking forward to participating with many of you in a meeting that I know will help us in our efforts to improve language teaching throughout the state and at all levels. The task ahead of all of us is to make language learning the meaningful and relevant experience it can be.

Aaron Polinsky
President, NJFLTA